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## Toward a Transformation of Neoclassical Theism

*Robert S. Corrington*

ONLY THE MOST insensitive observer would miss the fact that philosophical theology has taken several steps forward with the writings of Whitehead and Hartshorne. By rethinking the traditional traits of the divine nature, both thinkers have shown that any serious account of God must include those elements which are finite. For both Whitehead and Hartshorne, this finite dimension of the divine is most manifest in the relationality or relativity of God vis-à-vis the objects and events which constitute the world. God cannot be seen to stand outside of genuine and sympathetic relationality to those realities which are otherwise outside of the divine scope. Hartshorne's doctrine of panentheism stresses that every feeling-event is both related to and individuated from God. The life history of each event is retained forever in the divine memory. Hence, no event is beyond the reach of the divine sympathy. This powerful vision of the finite and relative dimension of God has taken philosophical theology beyond the limitations of classical theology and its commitments to a non-sympathetic *actus purus* which stands outside of any meaningful relation to the world.

This forward advance in our apprehension of the divine nature should not, however, blind us to certain difficulties attendant upon any attempt to overcome classical theism. Hartshorne's neo-classical theism creates a number of knotty problems when it attempts to reframe our understanding of those dimensions of God which relate directly to the world. Our concern in this essay is to highlight several of these difficulties and to recommend ways in which they can be overcome by a more adequate understanding of both God and nature.

No philosophical theology can succeed which fails to delineate those traits which are constitutive of nature as a whole. The reason for this will become clear as we proceed. Yet we can say at the outset that a complete doctrine of God requires that some light be shed on the transaction between God and nature. If this transaction is to be rendered without categorial confusion, then the fundamental traits of nature must be secured for conceptual apprehension. Further, no doctrine of God can fail to derive much of its structure from the "prior" understanding of those realities which are not divine. If one has failed to present a judicious account of nature, then the account of God will be thereby weakened.

Hartshorne has written a great deal about the reality of nature and has attempted to present something like a general ontology of all events. In the process he has shown how a new understanding of nature can affect our understanding of God.

In talking about nature we are attempting to make statements about "whatever

is in whatever way,"<sup>1</sup> such that no reality is left unaccounted for. We can assign one or more traits to the sum total of all realities in the hope that these traits will be exhibited in each and every instance. We can, in addition, hope to derive all "secondary" traits from the initial trait designation which stands at the foundation of our ontological probing. For Hartshorne, the traits of feeling and awareness are constitutive of nature as a whole and hence can be seen to function as the categorial primitives in his ontology.<sup>2</sup> Feeling is not, however, a static endurance of that which is apprehended (with whatever degree of consciousness). To be is to have a feeling-toned awareness of past events in the world in such a way as to allow those prior events to become constitutive of the self-evolution of the contemporary event. Perception is itself a subset of the class of memory events and has only the past, however recent, as its intentional object. Feeling, which 'uses' perceptual memory as its mode of access to other feelings, need not be highly differentiated nor conscious in order to be efficacious in bringing about a new creative synthesis for the evolving individual.

Yet underlying the traits of feeling and awareness (as expressed in the doctrine of psychicalism) is the one fundamental trait of creativity which is also held to be constitutive of all complexes, no matter how primitive. Hartshorne's psychicalism could not function in a static ontology which would deny the reality of self-transcendence for each event. Creativity functions as a transcendent category. All other categories derive their conceptual location from their relation to the pre-eminent category of creativity.

A theistic philosophy must take 'create' or 'creator' as a universal category, rather than as applicable to God alone. It must distinguish supreme creativity from lesser forms and attribute some degree of creativity to all actuality. It must make of creativity a 'transcendental', the very essence of reality as self-surpassing process.<sup>3</sup>

Reality thus has one eternal and ubiquitous trait, that of self-surpassing creativity. Feeling functions to provide the "material" for the enhancement of this process. There can be no reality which is neither a feeling nor a process. Whatever an event must be, it must be to some degree an open ended telic process which has as its highest goal the overcoming of its previous states. God exhibits creativity in the highest degree yet the categorial scheme demands that we read this trait backward, as it were, into all of the feeling-events of nature. Hartshorne states, "Individuals (not alone human individuals) must in some degree be self-managed, agents acting to some extent on their own, or they are not individuals, concrete units of reality."<sup>4</sup> Primitive complexes exhibit muted and rudimentary forms of creative self-overcoming in ways which are analogous to the divine creator.

The doctrine of psychicalism converges with the transcendental category of

<sup>1</sup>Justus Buchler, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 1. In much of what follows, Buchler's ordinal metaphysics forms one of the perspectives which serve to illuminate the strengths and weaknesses of Hartshorne's neo-classical theism.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Hartshorne, *The Logic of Perfection* (Lasalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1962), p. 140.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Hartshorne, *A Natural Theology for Our Time* (Lasalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1967), p. 26.

<sup>4</sup>Charles Hartshorne, *Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method* (Lasalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1970), p. 30.

creativity to show that all reality is mental and emergent into some form of novelty. Unlike the perspective of Leibniz, which combines psychicalism with determinism, Hartshorne insists that mind and novelty entail each other. The co-entailment of mentality and novelty can, of course, be traced back to the writings of both Whitehead and Peirce for whom the Leibnizian equation proved to be a deadening of the realities of both God and nature. Yet Hartshorne allows for efficient causality to be a part of both nature and the divine. At the same time, he denies that anything can be exhaustively understood purely in terms of antecedent material conditions. Even laws and the divine nature stand under the category of creativity. Like Peirce, Hartshorne rejects the notion that physical and mental laws have an eternal and static structure. If laws function like cosmic habits then they are amenable to both internal and external transformation.

Objects are thus emergent centers of feeling and telic striving. External antecedent conditions certainly help to determine the form that an emergent reality will take. Yet an internal drive toward some type of novel and rich convergence is found in each and every event of nature. While the realities of creativity, feeling, and psychic awareness are most manifest in the divine nature, they are also manifest in any reality no matter what its ontological location. The categories applicable to the divine are applicable to that which is not divine. Yet it is important for Hartshorne that we recognize just how differently the categories might be applied depending upon whether we are speaking of God or of non-divine events.

If the idea of God is to have a rational place among our ideas, four conditions must be satisfied. (1) There must be rules or principles valid for all individuals, not excluding God, rules definitive of the individuality purely in general, or as a 'transcendental'. (2) There must be rules valid for all individuals except God, rules definitive of 'non-Divine individual', or of individuality as a secular or non-transcendental category. (3) There must be a criterion for the distinction between the two sets of rules. (4) There must be reasons why the distinction needs to be made.<sup>5</sup>

The rules which are applicable to anything whatsoever are generic principles for metaphysics per se. Their unique application to a given reality requires that metaphysics have internal or subaltern disciplines of lesser scope. Talk which is specifically about God is thus of lesser scope than talk about "whatever is in whatever way." The 'translation' from talk of non-divine events to that of the divine nature is made possible by a set of rules which, as we shall see, depend upon the motor force of analogy.

Hartshorne allows that talk about God requires that we use "eminent" categories.<sup>6</sup> Thus we can say that God, like all events, has feelings of an eminent nature, or that God is a society (rather than a Whiteheadian actual occasion) but of an eminent nature.<sup>7</sup> Yet these "eminent" categories do not violate the spirit of their

<sup>5</sup>Charles Hartshorne, *A Natural Theology for Our Time*, p. 37.

<sup>6</sup>Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), p. 77.

<sup>7</sup>Lewis Ford, ed., *Two Process Philosophers: Hartshorne's Encounter with Whitehead* (Missoula, Montana: American Academy of Religion, 1973), p. 36. In the article entitled, "Hartshorne's Differences from Whitehead," David R. Griffin shows how Hartshorne goes beyond Whitehead by establishing that God is a society of occasions rather than a single bi-polar occasion. From our perspective, this represents a real advance beyond Whitehead.

normative and non-eminent use. They function to take reflection beyond the alleged limitations of the *via negativa* which would deny categorial insight into the divine nature. Categories applicable to the non-divine can be transformed into eminent categories applicable to the divine without losing their logical or systematic validity.

Yet there are traits found in God but not in non-divine events. The right use of categorial insight requires that these traits be delineated and rendered available to systematic apprehension. It is obviously as important to show the ways in which God and nature differ as to show the ways in which they share important traits. The problem always becomes: just which traits delimit nature as the non-divine and which traits can only be exhibited in the divine nature?

If nature can here be defined as that which is not the divine, then the problem becomes difficult. Hartshorne insists that God is related to each event as its telic lure, moving each event by Divine persuasion.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, God eternally remembers the life history of each event and preserves this memory in such a way as to render personal immortality unnecessary.<sup>9</sup> No event in nature can prevail outside of the divine awareness and sympathetic response. Hence it follows that no event can be fully defined without reference to the divine. For if God is relative to all events then all events acquire part of their internal reality from God. Hartshorne defines an internal relation as one that does something to the relata.<sup>10</sup> An external relation is one which does not involve a transformation in the being of the relata. God as bi-polar is both internally and externally related to the events of nature. As Absolute and abstract God has external relations to all events. As concrete God is all inclusive and has internal relations to all events:

We must combine the following assertions: the idea of the supreme being connotes absoluteness; it connotes, therefore, external relations; it also connotes relativity, internal relations, and all inclusiveness.<sup>11</sup>

Since an internal relation must transform the being or trait contour of the relata it follows that God, as lure, must be part of the internal constitution of every event in nature. God includes the events of nature but the events of nature cannot include God. The relation must be asymmetrical. God functions as both lure and divine memory for the events of the natural orders. The lure helps to determine the scope and richness of the subjective trajectory of each event. The divine memory includes the accomplishments of the varied events of nature.

Whatever nature is, it cannot be understood apart from the divine nature. It follows that the categories applicable to the non-divine must include reference to the divine. For if each event receives part of its telic meaning from its relation to the relative dimension of God, then an adequate definition of that event must entail a full definition of God. The separation between divine and non-divine rules (or categories) can at best be a tactical distinction which functions only in a specific context of discourse or assertion. Complete apprehension requires that

<sup>8</sup>Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity*, p. 142.

<sup>9</sup>Charles Hartshorne, *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1984), p. 34.

<sup>10</sup>Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity*, p. 66.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid*, p. 94.

divine and non-divine rules be used simultaneously. The notion of "eminent" categories, e.g., more aware, more loving, more just, etc., can only enhance the categorial articulation found on the level of nature. The application of such eminent categories to God does little more than stretch categories which function properly to describe "whatever is in whatever way." The process of 'stretching' these general categories is facilitated, as noted above, by a specific conception of the nature and role of analogy.

Hartshorne takes pains to distinguish between several types of discourse in human reflection upon nature and the divine. Key categorial terms are seen to function in one of three ways. They can function either symbolically, analogically, or literally.

God is symbolically ruler, but analogically conscious and loving, and literally both absolute (or necessary) in existence and relative (or contingent) in actuality—that is, in the concrete modes of His existence. True, His relativity is not the same in scope as ours, for He is relative to all things, and we are relative only to some. But the point is, that "all" and "some" have here their literal logical sense; whereas who can say literally how divine love differs qualitatively from ours?<sup>12</sup>

In other contexts, Hartshorne further differentiates between symbolic terms such as "ruler" and metaphorical terms such as "shepherd."<sup>13</sup> This distinction can be seen to represent a subaltern class within the symbolic in the more general sense. Needless to say, the role of analogy is the most crucial in determining the scope of a positive doctrine of God. As Schubert Ogden and others have shown, a number of textual and internal difficulties remain to plague Hartshorne's use of analogy.<sup>14</sup> Our concern is with the larger categorial role of analogy in the extension of predicates from human nature to the divine nature.

Hartshorne insists that analogy can function to generalize traits which are found within human awareness to the divine reality which is both like and unlike human awareness. This position is, of course, not unlike that of Aquinas and the medieval tradition in general. What is unique to Hartshorne and other process thinkers is the analogical extension of terms and traits derived from a particular conception of feeling. We start with our own awareness and push 'upward' and 'downward' through the use of analogy:

What is at least analogical in the scheme is the idea of prehension as dependence of an actuality on other actualities, or of participation, feeling of feeling, experience of

<sup>12</sup>Charles Hartshorne, *The Logic of Perfection*, p. 140.

<sup>13</sup>Cobb & Camwell, eds., *Existence and Actuality: Conversations With Charles Hartshorne* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 41. This distinction appears in Hartshorne's reply to Schubert M. Ogden's paper entitled, "The Experience of God: Critical Reflections on Hartshorne's Theory of Analogy."

<sup>14</sup>Schubert M. Ogden, "The Experience of God: Critical Reflections on Hartshorne's Theory of Analogy," anthologized in *Existence and Actuality: Conversations with Charles Hartshorne*. This essay shows a number of "internal" problems in Hartshorne's attempt to use analogy as a tool for understanding the divine nature. Ogden makes an important point when he states, "And just as significant, I think, he nowhere seems to explain, as he clearly has to explain if "conscious" and "knowing" are analogical, how not only the greatest but even the least possible individual must in some sense be said to be conscious and to know, as well as to be aware and to feel." p. 27. As we shall see, an ordinal analysis will cast doubts on such a procedure.

experience, together with the sense of futurity. Also the idea of creative novelty. These apply from atom to God. Moreover, all of them are directly intuited in our immediate memories of our own past, and in our experience of our own bodies.<sup>15</sup>

The burden carried by our immediate intuitions is great. From their initial and later refined articulation must come the full analogical structure which will apply to everything "from atom to God." Prehension is the universal trait which is best characterized as the feeling of feeling. The object of a given feeling is not a material state-of-affairs but another feeling. All relations are relations of feeling. Since the traits of human awareness are constitutive, in at least a derived sense, of all events, it follows that the starting point for metaphysical query is in a detailed report of the recurrent traits of that awareness. Hartshorne attempts to build a theory of analogy which will enable him to both generalize from out of human awareness while avoiding the charge of anthropomorphism which such a strategy brings.

Analogical statements are both qualitative and admit of degrees. Literal statements cannot admit of more or less. Hence, analogical statements appear to have a greater degree of flexibility when it comes to an articulation of the divine nature. Terms such as "feeling" can be pushed downward into nature by reducing the "degree" or intensity of their meaning. By the same token, such terms can be pushed upward toward God by increasing the "degree" or intensity of their meaning. The most important categories in the system are those which function analogously. On the other side, it is unclear what a truly "literal" function would be. If we say that God is relative we are using a term which is not univocal in meaning. To be relative is to admit of degrees of relativity, to admit of qualitative differences between the relata and their attendant relations. Univocity is an ideal for discourse rather than a resource of metaphysical generalization.

When we move beyond Hartshorne's theory of analogy to the specific conception of God which such a theory attempts to sustain, we see how far the analogical use of categories takes us. Hartshorne repeatedly rejects the notion that the use of *via negativa* can advance our apprehension of the divine nature.<sup>16</sup> Rather, the use of eminent and analogical categories gives us access to the overall positive contour of God. The literal assertions of God's relativity (actuality) and absolute-ness (existence) serve to provide the general framework which sustains and locates the perhaps more important analogical statements.

Methodologically, a careful modal analysis of contingency and necessity establishes the necessary existence of God. In his reworking of Anselm's ontological argument, taking account of Kant's critique of existence predication, Hartshorne attempts to show that God is the only unconditionally necessary existent. All predication, even that of existence, must be predication of God:

Any realized predicate whatever must be describable as a predicate of deity, in the form: God knowing that S is P. God is thus the universally presupposed subject of all predication, and his own nonexistence is therefore an impossible predication, or if you

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, from Hartshorne's reply to Ogden, p. 39.

<sup>16</sup>Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity*, pp. 77-78.

prefer, an impossible state of affairs. His mere existence is the essential element in all existence (and nonexistence) whatever. Hence his existence is not possibly unreal.<sup>17</sup>

God must exist as the ground for all predication no matter what its subject. God, as the subject of subjects, is the end point for all ascription of traits, including that of existence. The necessity of deity is, however, to be seen as derived from its unsurpassability.<sup>18</sup> God is that being than which no greater can be conceived. Yet God can at the same time be self-surpassing. God is unsurpassable by anything but itself. Hartshorne's reworking of the unsurpassability thesis allows him to include the actuality and relativity of God within a conception of God's existence and absoluteness.<sup>19</sup> This positive inclusion of God's self-development within a conception of God's perfection enables Hartshorne to advance beyond classical conceptions of God which stress the immutability and non-locatedness of God.

Yet this advance beyond classical theism leaves a number of conceptual problems in its wake. Hartshorne's categorial scheme needs to be reworked in such a way as to deepen the notions of relation and divine relativity. Further, a more radical understanding of both nature and the transactions between the divine and the non-divine need to be developed. From this radicalization must emerge a conception of the divine natures which will do justice to the locatedness of God in nature and the Encompassing.<sup>20</sup>

As noted, Hartshorne ascribes the traits of feeling and awareness to all events of nature. Our initial access to these traits is in an intuitive appraisal of our own form of consciousness and its intentional objects. Once these positive intuitions have been secured, they are extended through the use of analogy to the rest of nature. Further, the analogical extension of these traits is held to have phenomenological warrant.<sup>21</sup> Hence, the intuitive grasp of the traits of human apprehension functions to secure our categorial insight into nature as a whole. The phenomenological analysis is grafted onto a modal analysis to generate a full-blown positive doctrine of both God and nature. Analogy serves as the linguistic and conceptual cement for the categorial scheme.

The starting point for the foundational traits of the framework is in the order of nature funded with mind. Hartshorne assumes that the emergence of mental traits in the higher primates is indicative of a fundamental tendency within nature as a

<sup>17</sup>Charles Hartshorne, *Anselm's Discovery* (Lasalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1965), p. 85.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>19</sup>In his book, *Charles Hartshorne and the Existence of God* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985), Donald Wayne Viney persuasively argues that Hartshorne uses a variety of arguments to establish the existence of God. While the ontological argument, modified to include God's self-surpassability, assumes priority, it functions in consort with five other arguments—the cosmological, the argument from design, an aesthetic argument, an ethical argument, and an epistemic argument. Together these constitute what Viney calls a "Global Argument." All of them point to God's necessary existence and serve as what Viney calls non-empirical cumulative arguments.

<sup>20</sup>The concept of the Encompassing to be utilized later in this essay derives from the work of Karl Jaspers. It can be traced to two works from the 1930's: *Reason and Existenz*, trans. by William Earle (New York: Noonday Press, 1955) and *Philosophy of Existence*, trans. Richard F. Grabau (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1971). The concept of the Encompassing will be related to our fourth dimension of the divine nature.

<sup>21</sup>Conversation with Charles Hartshorne at The Pennsylvania State University during the summer of 1984.



whole. The existence of mind in persons provides phylogenetic evidence for something like mental traits in the rest of nature and the world. Feeling and awareness, no matter how primitive in operation or expression, prevail in all complexes of nature. This ascription of psychic traits to all of reality evidences a form of privileging which itself attests to a lingering foundationalism in Hartshorne's framework. A specific, and highly idiosyncratic, order of nature is selected as the foundation for metaphysical insight into all of the orders of nature. The "function" of evolution, if it can be understood functionally, is to make manifest those traits which prevail on the so-called "lower" levels of reality.

If we look at another evolutionary perspective, that of John Dewey, we see how a post-Darwinian analysis of nature can avoid the psychicalism which emerges from Hartshorne's account of reality. For Dewey, the existence of mind or mental traits is itself possible only because of certain pervasive yet unstable natural conditions. These conditions do not themselves evidence the existence of the traits of feeling or awareness but serve to support, however briefly, the existence of these traits in a small class of beings. No one order of nature is privileged as to its trait constitution. Each order, whether organic or not, has order-specific traits which cannot be extended to the rest of nature. Analogy can function as a guide for inquiry but it cannot serve as a tool for overcoming real differences between and among the orders of nature. Analogy must be used with great circumspection when moving from one order (ordinal location) to another. Metaphysical query is most sensitive when it seeks out genuine diremption between orders which may have only a small number of traits in common.<sup>22</sup>

Traits are rarely universal. In so far as a general category is unlimited in scope, it is never a category pertaining to the "whatness" of the world. Traits such as "feeling" and "awareness," as used by Hartshorne, are terms denoting a fundamental essence for all complexes of nature. While a term like "complex" is universal, as a designation for whatever is, a term like "feeling" is far more limited in scope. On the highest level of generality metaphysics is not concerned with delineating the fundamental "whatness" of reality. Any concern with essentiality or *quidditas* is limited to one or more ordinal locations. Hence essentiality is of and for limited orders.

Hartshorne makes two mistakes when he makes the claims for psychicalism. The first is in violating the ordinal nature of the world by taking order-specific traits (which are themselves contingent) and extending them to all orders of nature. The second is to envision the evolutionary perspective in such a way as to see teleological and mental traits in terms of a phylogenetic emergence which discounts genuine diremption and radical emergence. The existence of precarious mental traits is evidence only for their unique status in the orders of nature.

A deeper problem lies in his attempts to show the concrete and relative actuality of God and its relation to all complexes of nature. The differences between so-called ordinary and divine relativity is expressed as follows:

<sup>22</sup>This insistence on genuine diremption can be found throughout Buchler's general understanding of natural complexes. An ordinal metaphysics is cautious about removing order-specific traits from their given complexes. For an account of Buchler's use of ordinality, cf. Beth J. Singer, *Ordinal Naturalism: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Justus Buchler* (Lewisburg: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1983), and my "Ordinal Metaphysics and the Eclipse of Foundationalism," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 25 (September, 1985), 289-98.

. . . God is relative, but what we may call the extent of his relativity is wholly independent of circumstances, wholly nonrelative. Regardless of circumstances, of what happens anywhere or when, God will enjoy unrestricted cognitive relativity to all that coexists with him. By contrast, the extent of our human relativity is itself a relative matter, varying with circumstances. It varies all the way from the minimal cognitive relatedness of a man in deep sleep, or the zero cognitive relatedness of a dead man, to the maximal reflection of objects in full waking consciousness of a man in perfect condition and mental development.<sup>23</sup>

One can have no objection to Hartshorne's understanding of human relativity. The human process is fully finite if by finite is understood the fundamental locatedness of mind in orders larger in scope than itself. While the human process has a direction and occupies several domains,<sup>24</sup> it is clear that persons find themselves located in innumerable orders which themselves may thwart or hinder the directionality of the self. Of course, an adequate view of the self does not rely solely on mentalistic categories but must include the full articulation of the forms of human embeddedness.

When we come to the problem of divine relativity we are forced to point out some problems in Hartshorne's general theory of relations. It is clear that to be is to be related to more than internal self-identical traits. Other complexes and orders are part of the relational structure of any given complex. Relations may be of several kinds. In more traditional language, language utilized by Hartshorne, we can speak of internal and external relations as well as of symmetrical and asymmetrical relations. These distinctions are fairly straightforward in intent and function. No understanding of relation is adequate which is not prepared to give full scope to fundamental forms of asymmetry. Hartshorne's understanding of the actuality of God, i.e., God in its relativity, requires that God be part of an asymmetrical relation to the world. The world is included in God's actuality but God is not included in the world. God is thus dependent on the world but this doesn't limit God's supremacy over the world. Donald Wayne Viney puts it as follows:

Dependent is not always a defect. Therefore, Hartshorne believes in a God who is influenced by, and thus in a sense, dependent on the world. Furthermore, if God is, in some aspect dependent, then the idea of serving God makes sense. If God were in no way dependent on the world then it seems there would be no glory.<sup>25</sup>

On the surface, this perspective appears to be valid and useful. Yet a different way of framing the problem of relations shows that two other dimensions of God's nature need to be introduced.

A different account of relations is sounded by Justus Buchler when he analyzes the structure of complexes, whether these complexes be divine or non-divine.

<sup>23</sup>Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity*, p. 82.

<sup>24</sup>This understanding of the human process as having both direction and several domains derives from Buchler's *Toward a General Theory of Human Judgment*, 2nd revised edition (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1979). In this work Buchler develops his theory of "proception" which is a generic term designed to describe the full reality of human life."

<sup>25</sup>David Wayne Viney, *Charles Hartshorne and the Existence of God*, p. 29.

Any complex is related to others, though not to all others; and its traits are related to one another, though not necessarily each to every other. Whatever is, is in some relation: a given complex may be unrelated to another complex, but not unrelated to any other.<sup>26</sup>

Buchler rejects the distinction between internal and external relations, especially that understanding of internal relations which, when allied to psychicalism, entails that a given complex be related to all other complexes. Relations, rather, are ordinal and have specific limitations in scope. The actual tracing of relations is, of course, a matter of great complexity and entails that relations reach out in a variety of ways. But it does not follow that each complex is related to all others.

Buchler replaces the distinction between internal and external relations with a distinction between weak and strong relevance. A few words about this conceptual shift are in order before we can rework Hartshorne's theory of the divine nature.<sup>27</sup>

Complexes can be understood to have two dimensions or aspects: their scope and their integrity. The scope of a complex is its "comprehensiveness and pervasiveness." Any given complex will have some scope no matter how extended or contracted. A person, for example, will have greater or lesser scope depending on the richness and variety of relations he or she will sustain during a lifetime. Of course, the scope of the life of an important person will extend far beyond his or her actual finite life history. To prevail at all is to have some scope in some respect. The integrity of a complex is its trait configuration for a specific ordinal location. A complex will prevail in more than one order and thus have an integrity for each order. A person, as a multi-located complex, will have many integrities. For example, a given individual may have an integrity as a political being, a religious being, as a father or mother, as an educator, as a citizen, and as a friend. Each of these orders will have order-specific traits—an integrity. The "sum" of these integrities is termed the gross integrity, or the contour. Thus a person will have many integrities and a scope. The richer the life the more complex the integration of these integrities. When we focus on the problem of the divine nature, or better, divine natures, we will see the importance of these distinctions.

Returning to the theory of relation or relevance, we can now see how the distinction between scope and integrity helps us toward a new understanding of interaction. When a complex in any way modifies the scope of another complex, it is held to be weakly relevant to that complex. Thus, for example, when a new sandbar appears in the shore line of an ocean, that sandbar, as a natural complex, will affect the scope of the ocean. In this case the ocean will have slightly less surface spatial fullness than before. The integrity of the ocean will not be changed. When a complex in any way modifies the integrity of another complex, it is held to be strongly relevant to that complex. Thus, for example, if a toxic chemical were introduced into a lake, that lake would be changed in its integrity. The toxic chemical would be strongly relevant to the lake. It should be noted that the distinction between weak and strong relevance is not parallel to the more tradi-

<sup>26</sup>Justus Buchler, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes*, p. 24.

<sup>27</sup>For Hartshorne's criticisms, of Buchler's metaphysics, see his *Creativity in American Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1984). For a forceful analysis of these criticisms, see Marjorie Miller's review of this book in *Transactions of the C. S. Perice Society*, 21 (Summer, 1985).

tional distinction between internal and external relations. The principle of asymmetry is, however, preserved.

We can apply this new understanding of relevance to the complex interactions between God and the orders of nature. In working through these distinctions we will be compelled to delineate four dimensions of the divine. The second and third of these dimensions will roughly parallel Hartshorne's neoclassical account while the first and fourth dimensions will move us in a very different direction.

Of initial import is the realization that God cannot be simple in its nature. In so far as God is related to complexes other than itself, God has relation-specific traits which are not simple. The presence of the relative dimension of the divine evidences God's embeddedness in other natural complexes. Hence God is relevant to other complexes and receives part of its divine contour from these complexes. As itself a natural complex, God is an order of traits and relations which are unlimited in number. God is both weakly and strongly relevant to other complexes but expresses this relevance in more than one way. Only by rejecting the traditional notion of divine simplicity will we be able to begin to trace the full complexity of these forms of relevance.

The first dimension of God's reality is God's locatedness within the innumerable complexes of nature. In this dimension the divine is plurally located in orders and domains of the world which partially distort the emergent power of its nature. God is located and fragmented in orders of history, imagination, art, human striving, sacred texts, sacramental structures and events, language, gesture, human categorial structures, and communities. In each case, the divine is located in orders which have traits outside of the divine scope. God is strongly relevant to some of the subaltern orders within each order and weakly relevant to other subaltern orders. For example, God is strongly relevant to the integrity of certain works of art within the larger order of aesthetic query. The divine may be strongly present in the sacred music of Bach in such a way as to determine the evolving musical structure. Yet God may be weakly relevant to works of art which show an abiding opacity to ultimate import. Further, the divine may be unrelated to subaltern orders within any larger order. By being unrelated to the trait structures of a suborder, God does not express full presence within that order. If God is present in some forms of language God is not present in all forms. This "presence" is not, of course, an actual spatio-temporal availability but a trace of a highly elusive quality within the language itself. God may or may not affect the scope of language itself, but God does affect the integrity and scope of some linguistic structures. This is another way of saying that God is both relevant and non-relevant to the orders of the world. In so far as God is relevant to orders and their subalterns, God is either weakly or strongly so.

God's locatedness in the world entails that God is not equally relevant to all of the traits of the world. Some traits stand in a strongly relevant way to God while others may have either a weak relevance or none at all. This perspective strikes at the heart of Hartshorne's expressed belief that God is related to all aspects of the world. As we shall see in the third dimension of God, there is a sense in which God is relevant to all natural complexes but not in such a way as to affect their trait structures. God's locatedness in the world establishes that the world is of greater scope than the divine in its first dimension.

It is an impenetrable mystery as to why God is strongly relevant to some traits

and not to others. In the orders of history this impenetrability is the wall standing before our sense of the tragic. In the human moral orders this impenetrability is best expressed in the lament of Job. In each case human query comes up against a fragmented and partially absent God. The mystery of this absence is as much a source of religious query as is the felt presence of the divine majesty. One senses that unless God has other dimensions, we are left with a tragi-comic chiaroscuro without color or depth.

This sense of the fragmented and located reality of the divine is partially overcome in the second dimension of its nature. This second dimension, perhaps best expressed in eschatological language, is that of God in its role as the lure toward justice. If the first dimension is the broken God of the cross, the second dimension is that of hope and expectation. Hartshorne's understanding of the divine lure comes close to this understanding. For both Whitehead and Hartshorne, the divine lure functions to generate and sustain novelty and richness in the events of nature. The metaphor or image appropriate to these thinkers is that of adventure. God lures actual occasions toward novel and fruitful prehensions in such a way as to insure that the universe becomes more ramified and complex than before. This complexity requires a certain harmonic intensity if cosmic evolution is to be successful.

In this second dimension God is the gathering power of the world in such a way as to lure both history and nature (in the more traditional sense of nature as that which is not human) toward wholeness. This wholeness is not that of a fully enclosed and completed totality but that of a rich and open tension between elements.<sup>28</sup> Our sense of resurrection comes from this gathering power which lures us beyond the brokenness of history and nature. In the orders of history the divine lure functions as the drive toward radical justice for all persons and communities. Thus the divine lure attempts to move us beyond closure and demonic forms of injustice. In the orders of nature this wholeness appears whenever things show their transparency to the opening lure of divine fulfillment.<sup>29</sup> This fulfillment is never guaranteed but stands as a possibility and hope. The eschatological understanding of the second dimension of God does not entail anything like a myth of uniform progress or historical consummation. Such views represent a distortion of God's relation to history and nature.

As in the first dimension of the divine, the second dimension can prevail as weakly or strongly relevant to the orders of the world. God is strongly relevant to a person or society whenever radical justice functions to break the power of closure. This power is never operative in a causal way but stands as both a judgment and a lure over and against the orders of history and nature. While the

<sup>28</sup>For a rich and detailed account of the concept of wholeness and its contrast to mere completeness, cf., Carl G. Vaught, *The Quest for Wholeness* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1982). On page 154 of this work Vaught states, "From the outset, we have attempted to distinguish wholeness from completeness and have suggested that the quest for wholeness stands in between the fragmentation with which it begins and the completeness it might be tempted to affirm. Wholeness always displays a dimension of mystery and power that can never be included in a larger unity, but must simply be placed alongside the demand for intelligibility as an irreducible element." While it is clear that this quest for wholeness can be understood from the side of human finitude, it is one of the claims of my perspective that this quest can be seen to be part of God's self-evolution.

<sup>29</sup>For insight into the correlation between the things of nature and their transparency to the divine, Cf. my "The Christhood of Things," *The Drew Gateway*, 52 (Fall, 1981), 41-47.

first dimension of God is seen in terms of God's availability, of God as fragmented origin, the second dimension is seen in terms of God's call for justice and wholeness, of God as fragmented goal. In neither case can we ignore or go beyond the fragmented and finite reality of the divine. To attempt to secure these two dimensions of God in an imperial notion of presence or in a triumphal eschatology is to fall prey to idolatry.

In agreement with Hartshorne, we can say that analogy can function as a means for presenting the traits of the first two dimensions of God. It is quite appropriate to use analogical and eminent language when describing the role of the divine origin and goal in nature and history. Thus we can say that God's role as fragmented origin is analogous to the presence and absence of light over the contour of a landscape. Of course, the 'presence' of the divine is an eminent presence of a non-luminescent sort. A much more circumscribed use of analogy will be appropriate for the third dimension of God while a stringent use of *via negativa* will be necessary for our understanding of the fourth dimension.

God is not relevant to each complex of nature in this second dimension. The divine lure toward wholeness and justice is itself fragmented and limited in scope. There are complexes of both history and nature which do not experience this lure. Thus we must both insist on the finitude of God's scope in this dimension and insist that the reality of grace must be found elsewhere in the divine natures. The divine lure is the promise of fulfillment but cannot prevail as the grace which is granted to all the complexes of the world. To understand the meaning of grace we must probe into another dimension of God.

Buchler utilizes a distinction derived from Spinoza which sets the tone for our understanding of the third dimension of the divine:

The conceptions of nature as providingness and as ordinality are continuous with one another and with the conception of nature as "orders." This continuity can be conveyed by utilizing both members of the twin *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. Nature as ordinality is *natura naturans*; it is the providing, the engendering condition. Nature as "orders" is *natura naturata*; it is the provided, the ordinal manifestation, the World's complexes.<sup>30</sup>

In the first two dimensions of the divine we have dealt with how God is related to the orders of the world. The analysis of fragmented origins and ends has been allied to this understanding of *natura naturata*; of nature as that which is manifest as innumerable natural complexes. In this sense of nature God must be related to some but not all complexes. The divine can only be relevant to the traits of some complexes but not all. When we now shift to the other sense of nature; to nature as *natura naturans*, we move toward the third dimension of God.

God is manifest as the providing condition for all natural complexes in this third dimension. Yet God is not strongly relevant to the traits of any complex in this dimension. Rather, the divine is weakly relevant to all complexes no matter what their trait constitution. God stands as the power which sustains the preva-

<sup>30</sup>Justus Buchler, "Probing the Idea of Nature," *Process Studies*, 3 (Fall, 1978), 157-68. The importance of this essay has also been attested by Prof. John Ryder. For another, and somewhat divergent, account of an ordinal theology, cf. Peter H. Hare and John Ryder, "Buchler's Ordinal Metaphysics and Process Theology," *Process Studies*, 10 (Fall/Winter, 1980), 120-29.

lence of each complex without "interfering" with any ordering of traits. In one sense, God is least efficacious in this dimension. In another sense, God is most available as the power which enables prevalences to stand over against oblivion. If, from our perspective, the first dimension is seen as that of the cross while the second is seen as the resurrection then the third dimension is seen as the constant availability of grace. God as the providingness of all complexes is the ever "present" gift of grace which in no way alters the trait constitutions of the "objects" of that grace.

If we wish to retain the notion of "origin" in dealing with this dimension of the divine, we must insist that it is a non-fragmented origin which is present as sustaining grace. Yet the concept of origin often retains some lingering neo-Platonic connotations which would be inappropriate at this point in the analysis. Rather than speak of origin it is perhaps more suitable to speak of sheer providingness. The analogical extension of the notion of providingness must be used with great circumspection. While there are certain family resemblances with the Greek notion of *physis*, these parallels should be delineated with care. We can say that God's providingness is more than the "summed" total of all providings between and among the innumerable complexes of nature. God remains contrasted to the "sum" of the world's complexes while yet standing as their providing "source." But God should not be seen as something akin to "The force that through the green fuse drives the flower . . .,"<sup>31</sup> where this force is understood to be the sheer presence of energy and life enhancing power. Such an extension of the notion of providingness brings us too close to certain animistic connotations which still cling to the notion of *physis*.

The God of grace stands in what can best be described as a "quiet" relation to the complexes of the world. In this third dimension the divine nature functions as neither origin nor lure but abides as the still availability of the providential grace which never forsakes complexes. In so far as we wish to retain mathematical analogies we can say that God is infinite in this mode of its being. Put another way, God has sufficient scope to stand as the providingness for all complexes. It must be remembered, however, that God does not alter the trait constitution of a single complex in this mode of sheer providingness. Only in the first two dimensions, dimensions related to nature as natured, does God alter trait constitutions in either a strong or weak fashion. If we wish to make a refinement on the concept of relevance, we can say that God as providingness is neither weakly nor strongly relevant to complexes. Rather, the divine is relevant in such a way as to sustain the sheer prevalence of traits. Neither the integrity nor the scope of any complex is thereby altered.

Thus far we have been speaking of the relations which obtain between God and the world. Following Buchler, we have maintained the importance of the distinction between nature natured and nature naturing. God in its first two dimensions has been related to nature natured while God in its third dimension has been related to nature naturing. We have not spoken of a possible relation between God and something other than the innumerable complexes of the world and their

<sup>31</sup>Dylan Thomas, *The Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas* (New York: New Directions Books, 1938), p. 10. This is the first line in the poem of the same title.

ordinality. By speaking of this "something else" we will have moved into a discussion of the fourth and last dimension of the divine.

Earlier in this essay we made reference to the concept of the Encompassing. Initially we can say that the Encompassing is that which stands 'beyond' both God and the world as their final measure. In this measureless measure God finds its own lure. Our understanding of the relation between God and the Encompassing must reject the use of analogy and affirm the necessity of *via negativa*. Analogy is appropriate whenever we are comparing or contrasting natural complexes. The Encompassing, as the measureless measure, is not a natural complex and cannot be rendered available through the use of analogy or metaphor. We can only advance our apprehension of this elusive reality by a careful series of statements as to what it is not.

Karl Jaspers, who did the pioneering work on the concept of the Encompassing, was not always clear as to the separation between the reality of the Encompassing and that of Transcendence. To advance toward our understanding of the fourth dimension of the divine it becomes necessary to make this distinction sharp and total. God is itself encompassed and cannot be equated with the measureless measure which stands as the lure for its evolving life. The Encompassing encompasses both the world and the divine in its several natures. At the same time, the Encompassing is that which lures God toward growth and transformation. We can say that the Encompassing stands as the resurrection from God's standpoint. The divine is lured beyond its own incompleteness toward an 'internal' resurrection which enables God to be eternally self-surpassable.<sup>32</sup> What Hartshorne has failed to realize is that the divine becomes self-surpassing through its relation to the Encompassing. The growth which is manifest in the first three dimensions of the divine is itself rooted in this fourth dimension which insures that God will be lured toward eternal self-overcoming.

God receives its measure, its locatedness, by its inclusion in nature and history (first and second dimensions) and by its relation to the Encompassing. Nature locates the divine by fragmenting its power. The Encompassing locates the divine by showing it a measure which cannot be filled in or overcome. The Encompassing is ever receding from the divine. The one trait which can be ascribed to the Encompassing is the relational trait of luring.

The Encompassing cannot be envisioned through the analogy of a horizon of horizons or order of orders. Horizons and orders, even when enumerated and "summed" (itself an impossible notion) would not fill in the Encompassing and give it a positive contour. Neither the world nor the Encompassing has a real or knowable contour. We can say that nature stands as the Encompassing for given natural complexes while the Encompassing itself stands as the measureless measure for nature and the divine. God is a natural complex while the Encompassing is not. This is the one exception to the ordinal framework which insists that whatever is, is a natural complex.

The relation between God and the Encompassing is one which involves the divine's sense of its own incompleteness—its own need for resurrection. God has

<sup>32</sup>A psychological account of God's need for its own internal resurrection can be seen in Carl Jung's brilliant "Answer to Job," in *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, 2nd ed., trans. R. F. C. Hull, Vol. II, *Collected Works of C. G. Jung* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).



its other in the Encompassing lure which provides the power of the Open through which the divine can grow. Without this positive and eternal clearing the divine would not have the scope within which to enhance its life. This clearing is both measure and lure. Even though God has unlimited scope in its third dimension as the providingness of all complexes, it stands within the Open region granted to it by the Encompassing lure. In so far as we wish to retain some elements of the neoclassical and processive understanding of the divine, we must subsume these under the "larger" sense of the Encompassing lure which gives the divine the "space" for its own processive evolution.

Of course, these four dimensions of the divine do not appear separately in our ramified experiences of God. Something akin to C. S. Peirce's notion of "pre-scinding" has been necessary for our analysis. Peirce insisted that his fundamental categories (firstness, secondness, and thirdness) must all appear in any phenomenon. They may prevail in varying degrees of intensity or instantiation in a given case, but they must all be present to some extent. This insight carries over to our understanding of the dimensions of the divine. We can separate them out for analysis and articulation, but it must always be remembered that they occur together in the divine life itself. God does experience diremptions in its embeddedness in nature and history but does not experience any fundamental diremption between its four natures. The final word must always be given to divine unity and wholeness. God does not prevail as a closed totality but as a complex whole which allows for internal growth and self-surpassing. The lure of the Encompassing exerts a loving pressure which keeps God's several natures from risking bifurcation and decay. God moves toward ever richer forms of wholeness as it struggles with the recalcitrance and opacity of the world. In this movement, both eternal and pervasive, the divine finds that measureless measure which governs its life.