

Hartshorne's argument for freedom appears to assume that, but for our experience of "decision" in the full-blown psychical sense, we have no positive idea of contingency/chance, which, viewed behavioristically, is really negative, i.e., "lack of necessity," or "absence of fully determining antecedent conditions" (*Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes*: 22 f.; cf. *PCH*: 38, 612).

But here, again, curiously, he seems to forget his own doctrines that purely formal, literal ideas (1) are not negative but positive even if utterly abstract; and (2) are necessarily presupposed by all material or "mixed" and, therefore, nonliteral ideas, whether symbolic, metaphorical, or "analogical."

By his own reasoning elsewhere, in clarifying the meaning of "nothing," he's careful to point out that ~~that~~ even sheer, utterly abstract structure is not negative but positive. "God's essence . . . is an empty outline, and is infinitely less than the divine actuality. But this empty outline is still not in the most extreme sense nothing" ("The Divine Relativity and Absoluteness: A Reply to John Wild" : 52 f.).

In sum: "The necessary, . . . in the abstract way appropriate to it, also 'is'" ("Absolute Objects and Relative Subjects: A Reply to D. H. Parker": 184).

26 February 2006