

Hartshorne asks, "What are we to conclude from the apparent fact that theism, as theists understand it, is not scientifically testable at all?"

He answers by first allowing that there are three possibilities: "We might conclude that theism has no consistent meaning, and hence could not be true. Or, we might conclude that it has some meaning, but of a sort whose truth is untestable by human means. Finally, we might conclude that it has meaning, and that science is not the only human means of testing truth." He then says, "This last is my position. I hold that the relevant test of ideas of God is their ability to integrate, not facts of science, but the principles which all science and all life presuppose, principles without which we could not understand how there could be facts at all, or why it is worth knowing what the facts are. Not facts, but the idea of fact, not values but the idea of value, not truths but the idea of truth, is what theism tries to elucidate. The study which investigates such questions is philosophy. To suppose that natural science can substitute for philosophy in this task is logical confusion; it is pseudoscience, not science" ("The Modern World and a Modern View of God" : 77).

At the end of the same essay, after having summarized his basic view, Hartshorne asks, "But how . . . can we know any such view to be true?" His answer is summarized in brief as follows:

"That philosophy is true which contains in itself the explanatory power of its rivals, plus additional power of its own. The theory of pervasive freedom explains evil at least as well as any other view could do, for freedom is always risk. But the theory explains good better than any other view, provided we admit a supreme or divine level of freedom, by whose influence all lesser freedom can be benignly guided and coordinated, for freedom thus coordinated is primarily opportunity, and only secondarily risk. Thus freedom, if taken as both divine and non-divine[,] is self-explanatory, accounting alike for its failures and its successes. It is the only self-explanatory principle. Order is due to the over-ruling supremacy of divine freedom, disorder to the multiplicity of lesser freedom" (84).

I offer the following comments:

1. Significantly, Hartshorne makes no allowance for a "noncognitivist" analysis of theism as theists understand it. On the contrary, he simply assumes—I should think with every justification—that, so far as theists themselves are concerned, theism has the kind of meaning that makes the question of truth a logically proper question. On this assumption, the three possibilities he allows would certainly appear to be the *only* possibilities.

2. It is noteworthy that in his answer to the first question, the operative verbs Hartshorne uses to characterize what philosophy—or theism as a philosophy—does, as distinct from what science does, are "integrate" and "elucidate." In his answer to the second question, on the other hand, the operative verb used for the same purpose is "explain." Is there some reason for this difference? I suspect there is. In his first answer, Hartshorne is talking, not about philosophy in general, but about theism in particular, even though the clear implication of the penultimate sentence in his answer is that theism is precisely a philosophy. Thus he speaks, not, as he does in his second answer, about "(philosophical) theories" (or "views") in general, but about "(philosophical) ideas of God" in particular. If the function of the first is to explain in the way in which philosophical theories (or views) are supposed to do, the function of the second is to integrate or elucidate such explanatory theories (or views)—or, as Hartshorne also calls them, the "principles" or "ideas" that all science and all life presuppose. The relevant test of an idea of God, in other words, is whether, or to what extent, it integrates or elucidates all of the other ideas that we could not fail to employ insofar as we know or live at all.

3. I fail to see that it makes sense to say, as Hartshorne does, that "freedom is *self-explanatory*," as distinct from saying that "freedom is *all-explanatory*." In what sense does (or could) freedom explain itself? Hartshorne's point, surely, is that freedom, if taken as both divine and non-divine, explains everything else, accounting alike for good (or the successes of freedom) and for evil (or the failures of freedom).

11 April 1997

Addendum

In at least one place, Hartshorne himself uses the concept "all-explanatory." "In general," he says, "the ultimate or all-explanatory pole of a contrast is that one whose instances can consistently include the instances of the other pole within themselves" (*CSPM*: 166).

See also "Process as Inclusive Category": 96: "The inclusive category . . . is the one which can contain the contrast which the category involves, while the non-inclusive [*sc.* category] is the one which, if taken as inclusive, would contradict the contrast and so destroy the basis of its own meaning."

I take it to be clear that "inclusive category" is simply another way of saying "ultimate category," and that, therefore, "the inclusive category" is "the all-explanatory (not "self-explanatory") pole of a contrast."