

Hartshorne argues that "to refuse to generalize feeling as the stuff of nature is to condemn our knowledge to the extremely abstract, geometrical, arithmetical, and causal relations (really relations of relations) which are all that the formulae of physics and chemistry can express" ("In Defense of Wordsworth's View of Nature": 85). But this argument is thoroughly unconvincing if not disingenuous.

By his own account, there is at the strictly metaphysical level of knowledge, which is different in type from the scientific level of knowledge, not only the symbolic and analogical strata of meaning, but also the strictly literal stratum, where the relevant concepts are purely formal, in no sense material, in the way in which "feeling" is. But if this is correct, then to refuse to generalize feeling is in no way to "condemn" our knowledge to the abstractions of science. Beyond anything that science tells us or could tell us, we know, e.g., that anything in nature, insofar as it is concrete and singular, is internally related to other concrete singulars as well as to aggregates and to various types of abstracts (species, genera, categories, as well as transcendentals), and will be the term of the internal relations of other concretes subsequent to it. In a word, we know everything about any concrete that is implied by the idea of concreteness as such, the clearest sample of which is the concrete reality of our own subjectivity, i.e., feeling. But that feeling is a concrete need not imply that a concrete is feeling; nor is this implied because any concrete is given to us as a feeling, since anything given to us, as given, including abstracts, is given as feeling.

5 May 1990