

1. There are passages in which Hartshorne expresses his understanding of analogy in a way to which I find it hard to take exception. Consider, e.g., the following:

"We incline to assume that we can interpret other human beings by analogy with our own personal traits, feelings, thoughts. True, we often go astray in this process; however, it serves us well enough much of the time. With the other higher animals we find the analogy less clear, but still vaguely convincing. With plants and inanimate nature, we are inclined to doubt that there is a significant analogy. Nevertheless a fair number of Western thinkers, including Whitehead, Peirce, and Bergson, have held that there is no good alternative to the psychical analogy in trying to understand the world. Even physics asserts a correspondence between human thought patterns and patterns in nature. Observations and experiments are used to control the extent of such analogies. What the physicist does not do, at least officially, is to posit any analogy at all between emotional, sensory, or value aspects of human nature and the natures of non-human things. This limits our account of nature, apart from our species, to certain very abstract mathematical patterns. As a physicist has recently said of a certain physical particle, we know its quantum numbers and its mass (another number), and that is all. Whitehead thinks, and Russell once said the same, that such mathematical abstractions cannot tell the whole story of what is concretely there in nature. Russell and Whitehead differ, however, in their view of what is omitted by the abstractions. Russell believes that we can never know what things, apart from animals like ourselves, concretely are; Whitehead believes that we can at least know that there is in things something which, in some way and degree, however remotely, corresponds to what in us is emotion, sensation, memory, anticipation, and the like" ("Process Themes in Chinese Thought": 333 f.).

2. Clearly, there is a difference between saying that "there is in things something which, in some way and degree, however remotely, corresponds to what in us is emotion," etc. and saying, as Hartshorne also and rather more typically does, that "there is in things, something which in some way and degree, however remotely, is what in us is emotion," etc. The extent of this difference is great enough, indeed, that the first formulation is not really psychicalism at all; for that there is something in all things that more or less remotely corresponds to what in us is psychical in no way implies that all things are, or, rather, that any concrete singular thing is, in some way and degree, psychical. Perhaps among the other reasons for whatever plausibility Hartshorne's doctrine has is that he now and again formulates it in such a way that it is not really what he claims it is, but, rather, is an example of the very Russellian agnosticism that he tends to deplore.

3. Elsewhere, in the context of a closely parallel discussion, Hartshorne formulates his position as holding that "the concrete more that the mathematics leaves out" is "neither mere matter, whatever that could be, nor our human experiences, but a vast variety of forms taken by a principle of which human experience is only one extremely special form. This principle is experience as such or in general, experience whether human, subhuman, even subanimal, and perhaps also superhuman; experience whether that enjoyed by people, apes, porpoises, fish, bacteria, even molecules, atoms, and particles. I call this doctrine psychicalism" ("Can We Understand God?": 76). So formulated, this is simply Hartshorne's usual unacceptable doctrine. But suppose that the italics were to be removed from "human" in "human experience" in the first sentence and that the second sentence, which would then become unnecessary, were simply eliminated. Then Hartshorne would be

saying that the concrete more in concrete things abstracted from by the formulæ of mathematical physics is some form or other of the same principle of which human experience is the only form clearly give in our experience as human beings. The question would then remain open whether, or to what extent, any of these other forms of the principle, to say nothing of the principle itself, can and should be described by the word "experience."

4. That, in point of fact, Hartshorne's dogmatic answer to this question merely begs it at once becomes clear when one realizes that all that he could possibly mean—clearly and coherently—by "experience as such or in general" is the transcendental idea of "event," i.e., something that (1) is not only real for other things but also such that other things are real for it, but that (2) cannot be real for itself and, therefore, has strict rather than genetic identity. That any "actual occasion" of human experience is a specific instantiation of this transcendental idea of event may indeed warrant claiming that in any other such instantiation there must be something that corresponds to such an occasion and may, therefore, be thought and spoken of "symbolically," though not literally, as an occasion of "experience." But more than this metaphysics as such is not in a position to claim without begging a question that it must, in the nature of the case, leave open if it is to be a properly critical, nondogmatic metaphysics.

18 June 1987