

According to Hartshorne, there is a "pretension inherent in theism as such," to the effect that "God is by definition an infinite exception!" This means, he argues, that "each category has two levels of possible meaning, the ordinary one and the extraordinary one applicable only to God." Thus, if "God" means what theists say it means, God "is 'an individual' who yet is not *simply* an individual, whose 'nature' or quality is not *simply* a quality, and who 'exists,' but not *simply* as other things exist." Accordingly, "[t]o take God to be simply an individual, simply having a nature or quality, simply existing, is certainly a category mistake, if ever there was one! Deity must itself be a sort of category, and the supreme category, and until *its* rules have been investigated, there can be no demonstration that any relevant rules have been violated" (AD: 77, 66).

But now if deity itself is a category, indeed, "the supreme category," it can hardly be true that "*each* category has two levels of possible meaning," etc. (italics added). Obviously, what Hartshorne has to mean is *that all categories other than "God" have these two levels of possible meaning.*

Of course, the proper concept-term here is not "categories," anyhow, but "transcendentals." All transcendental conceptions other than "God" have two levels of possible meaning: the ordinary one, whereon they are applicable to all individuals other than God; and the extraordinary one, on which they can be applied solely to God. This is why God is rightly taken, not simply as "an individual," but only as *the* individual, the universal individual; not simply as having one "nature or quality" among others, but as having *the* essence, the one, self-individuating essence in which all other essences are unified; and not simply as "existing," as everything else exists, contingently, with the possibility of not existing at all, but as God alone exists, *necessarily*, beyond even the possibility of nonexistence.

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