

Hartshorne says, "God in His bare existence is not a mere special quality, but a Universal of universals, the Form of forms" (AD: 127). But what is this if not to say of God in God's bare existence what Whitehead says, not of God, but of creativity (cf. *PRc*: 21)?

My problem with saying it is that, according to Hartshorne's own usual exposition of the relevant rule, the *existence* of *x* means the *essence of x somehow actualized*. But, then, how can the existence of *x*, for any value of *x*, including God, be said to be, simply, *a*, or even *the*, "universal" or "form"? What needs to be said, instead, I judge, is that God in God's bare existence is not a mere special quality somehow actualized, but the Universal of universals, or the Form of forms, somehow actualized. In other words, it is not the bare existence of God but God's essence that is rightly said to be "the Universal of universals," or "the Form of forms," because the essence of God is indeed the unification of all strictly universal essences into one.

Elsewhere, Hartshorne himself makes the relevant distinction: "[I]t is not quite correct to identify the divine essence with God as an individual. The divine essence is the individuality of God, but not God as an individual. An individual can surpass itself, but not an individuality. The distinction is between the 'defining characteristic' . . . of an enduring society or ordered sequence of states or unit events, and the society itself" (290 f.).

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