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## The God of Charles Hartshorne. The Problem of Divinity?

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Bóg Charlesa Hartshornea. Problem boskości?

When we talk about the God – world relationship we have two juxtapositional solutions: there is on one hand pantheism, and on the other hand – classical theism. Pantheism with its lack of the divine personality and transcendence hardly escapes atheism. The classical theism of Thomas Aquinas, which shows an absolute divinity, has its problems with the God – world relationship, where the world does not have any impact on God because he is infinitely distant from the world. Therefore the Thomistic God is impassible and does not need the world. The absoluteness of God influences the Thomistic descriptions of God: we can rather say what God is not than what he is positively. Hartshorne claims his panentheistic doctrine to be a central solution in comparison to classical theism and pantheism, which is able to overcome the problems of the two interpretations<sup>1</sup>.

Hartshorne's solution ascribes to God personality and transcendence, which is contrary to pantheism. Contrary to Thomism, Hartshorne acknowledges that God does depend on the world because the world is his body. Hartshorne also says that we have positive insight into what God is. In this aspect Hartshorne is more optimistic than Aquinas. On the other hand according to me the Hartshornean solution is not free from problems. The most important one has to do with the conception of transcendence, and in turn may have an impact on the notion of deity and the divine influence upon the world. In my opinion it is necessary that if talking about the divine transcendence upon the world, we should qualify this as a difference of nature, i.e. difference in principle. Otherwise we cannot talk sufficiently about transcendence of God but only about his greater perfection. It seems that the latter case might be the Hartshornean understanding of transcendence of God upon the world; God is not

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<sup>1</sup> Ch. Hartshorne. *Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism*, Chicago 1941, p. 348.

totally different – God is only the highest degree of the values that are in the world. Sia commenting the Hartshornean notion of transcendence says that there is difference in principle between the world and God: *There is about God superiority in principle when compared with any other individual*<sup>2</sup>. I want to examine whether it is really so<sup>3</sup>. Therefore after presenting some critics of the Hartshornean notion of transcendence I will define the notion of the difference in principle and according to this criterion I will examine the most fundamental Hartshorne's statements about the divine transcendence.

## 1. DIFFICULTIES OF HARTSHORNE'S INTERPRETATION

Hartshorne says explicitly that his system is different from the pantheistic solution. If we describe pantheism as a system in which God is impersonal and not transcendent to the world, then Hartshorne's solution seems to overcome this weakness because for him God is a person and is relative to every being in the world. Through this relativity God transcends all beings<sup>4</sup>. This kind of relativity leads to the unsurpassability of God. The world as a unity does not feel and does not remember perfectly; the world is not a person. What is more, the world is not any metaphysical unity at all. But God surpasses all these imperfections of the world, and in this way God is unsurpassable. The unsurpassability of God is something opposite to the fragmentation of the world. The particular elements of the world are merely fragments of a bigger wholeness. All this shows that God transcends the world and is different from it. Sia stresses that among all the divine features, unsurpassability is especially responsible for the divine transcendence. There is no other being, which could compete with God, not even the whole world as such.<sup>5</sup> Other features, which express the divine unsurpassability and distinguish God from the world, are eminence and worshipfulness. Only God is unsurpassable, eminent and thus worshipful<sup>6</sup>. This notion of transcendence, which is grounded in the notion of unsurpassability, is at the basis of the Hartshornean conception of divinity.

Let us now take a look at some of the criticism of Hartshorne's conception of transcendence and divinity.

Ford criticizes the Hartshornean understanding of the difference between the world and God, pointing out that if God is to be different from the world, God has to

<sup>2</sup> S. Sia, *God in Process Thought. A Study in Charles Hartshorne's Concept of God*, Dordrecht – Boston – Lancaster 1985, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> I do not want to present the problems that Aquinas and Spinoza have to deal with. All the Thomistic opinions I present in this text are there in order to emphasize a point of view different from the Hartshornean one.

<sup>4</sup> Ch. Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity. A Social Conception of God*, New Haven–London, 1948, p. 89.

<sup>5</sup> Sia, *God in*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 47-48.

be different from it in principle. The dipolar nature of God does not guarantee the essential difference between these two elements of reality, though it is necessary to guarantee the basic level of the transcendence of God. If God were not essentially different from the world this could mean that God is not transcendent enough to the world and therefore Hartshorne could not be said to overcome pantheism, according to which God and the world are the same. Ford also emphasizes that the Hartshornean God does not transcend time, because he is purely in time. In this way he cannot act in the presentness, which is necessary in order to act in the world<sup>7</sup>. Therefore God needs a nontemporal element – Ford suggests<sup>8</sup>. Since the world is purely temporal God could be different in principle, if he had a nontemporal element. That is why Ford says – analyzing Hartshorne's theory – that the difference between the above mentioned elements is not essential<sup>9</sup>.

Gutowski in turn says that even though God is a necessary being, this is not sufficient ground for acknowledging that God is transcendent to the world. The world as a compound of beings, which form the world, is as everlasting as God, in which case the world as such and God are both necessary and contingent beings. God cannot exist without the world and the world cannot exist without God. In this sense God is not different from the world. The only difference between them is that God is the unity of the world<sup>10</sup>.

According to me this notion of transcendence does not guarantee God to be essentially different from the world<sup>11</sup>, which is necessary in order to ascribe divinity to the unity of the world and call it *God*. It seems that the Hartshornean notion of the divine dependence upon the world modifies God's transcendence in such a way that God is seen as a world-like component. If so, can we ascribe divinity to this kind of unity? We should remember that there might be different levels of transcendence. This one rather indicates that the Hartshornean solution is more pantheistic, where god is hardly God.

## 2. DEFINITION OF THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE

In order to check whether this criticism is justified, let us examine Hartshorne's statements concerning divine transcendence.

First let us try to define the difference in principle, i.e. the distinction between quantitative and qualitative (essential) difference. We call A as quantitatively differ-

<sup>7</sup> L. S. Ford, *Temporality and Transcendence*, In: *Hartshorne, Process Philosophy, and Theology*, ed. R. Kane, S. H. Phillips, Albany 1989, pp. 162-163.

<sup>8</sup> L. S. Ford, *God as a Temporally-Ordered Society. Some Objections*, 'Tulane Studies in Philosophy', 34 (1986), p. 44.

<sup>9</sup> Ford, *Temporality*, p. 162.

<sup>10</sup> P. Gutowski, *Filozofia procesu i jej metafizologia. Studium metafizyki Ch. Hartshorne'a*, Lublin 1995, pp. 98-99.

<sup>11</sup> I use the terms: difference of nature, essential difference, quantitative difference to express the same thing.

ent from B if A has the same attributes as B but these attributes differ only in degree or intensity. We call the difference between A and B as qualitative (essential) if A has attributes that B does not have. The consequence of the qualitative difference is a difference of nature, i.e. the way something acts. If A is qualitatively different from B, then A can act in the way that B cannot. The distinction between stone A and stone B is quantitative if both have the same attributes, which determine that they are stones. Even if they had different colors that would mean that there is only some difference in the surface of the stones where one reflects one portion of light and the other another portion of light. The stones can have different colors because color does not determine that a stone is a stone, i.e. it does not determine the essence of the stone. But there is a qualitative difference between a stone and a human being, where the latter one thinks, if thinking is something that differs from non-thinking.

We can give another example of the essential difference. Let us turn towards Thomas Aquinas' philosophy of religion. He says that people and God have mind. The difference between the two is essential even though Aquinas uses the same word *mind* to describe the different realities. The human mind is a part of the human being. Humans think in time, which means there is a process of acquiring knowledge. The human mind gains some knowledge by turning towards the object. The effect of the cognitive process is that the mental form of the object exists in the mind of the subject. In God it is quite different. The divine mind is not any part of God. The entire divine being is his own mind. There is also no cognitive process in God because everything *happens* out of time. God knows everything eternally, where eternity is understood as timelessness. God does not have to turn towards the object in order to know it. God knows every object by having its mental form in himself because God gives existence to every object<sup>12</sup>. In both cases we can call it *mind* since there is a mental form of the object in God and in a human being. However, the attributes of the human mind and of the divine mind are quite different. In one case it is part of the being but in another case it is the entire being. One knows by turning towards the object, the other knows in himself. One operates in time, the other one out of time. These two concepts of mind are an example of what we call the difference in principle.

### 3. HARTSHORNE'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD – GOD DIFFERENCE

Once I have defined the notion of the difference in principle let us now examine some Hartshornean examples of the differences between God and the world. In this way we can examine to what category of the above mentioned difference should be ascribed.

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<sup>12</sup> Th. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 8.

## Mind – body model

Hartshorne says that the God – world relationship can be compared to the mind – body relationship. This comparison shows how Hartshorne understands the difference between God and the world. According to him there is an analogy between the structures of the human mind – body relationship and the God – world relationship. How is it possible that we may use this analogy in order to determine the kind of God – world relationship? Hartshorne says that the only knowledge that we have before analyzing the nature of God is the human nature, i.e. ourselves. If we make this relationship sufficiently general we can interpret the God – world relationship in terms of the mind – body relationship<sup>13</sup>. In these terms the world has the function of the body, and God of the mind. The mind is something, which arises from the body, where the body is a compound of individual beings and the mind is one being. The mind is the unity of the body. We can say the same about God: the world is the body of God, who is the unity of the world. The world is a compound of beings and God as a single being is its unity. The world as such is not a unity. Its unity is God. This is the first difference between the world and God: the world is not a unity because it is a compound, and God is a unity. That really is a difference in principle between these two elements of the reality because God is an integrated being, which the world is not. Therefore, God can act as one being, which the world cannot do.

On the other hand we should remember that every single process that takes place in the world is also a unity of a limited number of processes, as it has a limited number of objects that it is related to. However, God has as his object all the processes in the world; God is always a single process, i.e. the unity of the world. This is the difference between God and any other individual being. We realize that in the case of the God – world comparison there is an essential difference, but we cannot acknowledge this kind of difference if we compare God to any concrete being in the world, since God is in contact with all the beings of the world where a single being has limited contact with other beings. The difference between the two is only of an extensional character. In this way God is unsurpassable, whereas the beings that form the world are not unsurpassable.

We should not think that if God has the nature of the mind it is something opposed to the body. God has a different function in the reality but the same nature; he is a feeling subject. He is a creative synthesis as every feeling is. He is unsurpassably more complex than the world. On the other hand the world is not any subject as God is. We should remember that there is a difference between a single being, which is a part of the world and the world as such. A single being is a unity of other beings and it is a subject. It feels. The world is not a subject, and therefore not a being. The world does not feel either. Yes, the world is a unity of all the beings but as an object. As long as it is a simple unity of all the beings the world is always an object. The unity of the world, which is a subject, is God. Only God feels and is a being. God in

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<sup>13</sup> Hartshorne, *Man's*, pp. 175-176.

this case is essentially different from the world<sup>14</sup>. Hartshorne rejects the possibility that the sum of all the beings in the world is God. The real unity must always be a subject, and this subject is more than a sheer sum of all the beings. God surpasses the world with his complexity and feeling. God feels the whole world. If we compare a single worldly being with God we notice that again the difference has to do with the extension of the relativity. On the other hand if we compare the objectivity of the world with the subjectivity of God we have to admit that there is a difference in principle. The world is not any subject, because it does not feel.

The fact that God has a divine mind is without any doubt an essential difference in comparison to the world. But if we compare the subjectivity of God with the subjectivity of any being we have to admit that all the beings are subjects. Only the world does not have any mind since it is not a subject. We can compare the human mind with the divine one. If there is an essential difference between the world and God in this aspect, there is another kind of difference between the divine mind and the human one. Contrary to the limited power of the human mind, Hartshorne is describing the unsurpassability of the divine mind in terms of perfection and maximal extension of the divine knowledge. Humans know imperfectly because our mind is fallible. We can also only know things, which we are in contact with, and this limits the scope of our cognition. We have imperfect and limited knowledge because our mind is limited. God knows everything that is to know. His knowledge is error free. He knows unsurpassably more than other minds. In terms of the above-defined essential difference, we can say that there is no qualitative difference between the human and divine mind. Hartshorne states explicitly that the only dimensions by which the divine knowledge and power are superior to worldly ones are those of *scope and completeness*<sup>15</sup>. God knows and wants *eminenter, in a uniquely exalted fashion*<sup>16</sup>.

Only the unity and personality mean that God is essentially different from the world as such. Without the unity that God gives to the world, the world would be a compound of individuals. God gives unity to the world, which the world does not have by itself. If we compare God to other beings we notice that God is not essentially different from them. He is rather superior than essentially different.

### The God – world relationship

Hartshorne analyzes whether God is all-inclusive or not. He comes to the conclusion that God can only be all-inclusive because otherwise he would just be a part of the whole and *not the supreme reality after all*. God has to be all-inclusive *of all relative things, but also of "the absolute", which is indeed but an abstract aspect of relative reality, its relativity as such or in principle*<sup>17</sup>. This is a proof of the lack of

<sup>14</sup> Gutowski, *Filozofia procesu*, p. 101.

<sup>15</sup> Hartshorne, *Man's*, p. 178.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>17</sup> Ch. Hartshorne, *Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method*, Lanham 1983, p. 48.

an essential difference between the world and God. If both can compete in respect of being parts of the totality that means that the world and God have some common ground where they can compete. For Aquinas there is no such common ground, and therefore reality consists of all the beings and God. That means that numerically God is less than the whole reality, which does not undermine his perfection. It would undermine his perfection if God had some common ground of comparison with the world. The world cannot compete with God, therefore for Aquinas, God does not have to be all-inclusive. God and the world are different and somehow independent beings. The independence of the world from God does not impair the absoluteness of God. God is above any comparison to the world on account of his different nature<sup>18</sup> and even an infinite number of other beings does not diminish his supremacy. Thomism understands the perfection of God intensively and not extensively. Even though the world is spatial it does not mean that it is in any sense an obstruction to the infinity of God, because God is out of space. Therefore only if there is a common ground, on which the world and God can compete, there is also mutual limitation of perfection. This limitation of perfection is not present in Thomism because God and the world exist on different levels.

It is also possible to understand that reality has to be synonymous with God, who includes the world in order to guarantee his supremacy over the whole reality. This is the stance that Hartshorne adopts. It means that God is to be understood as intensively, and therefore also extensively compatible with the world. In this case God must be all-inclusive. We can notice how this notion of perfection of God influences Hartshorne's understanding of the biblical commandment to love God and one's neighbor. If we are to love God and others with all our hearts, it is only possible if God and our neighbor are the same – says Hartshorne. If the neighbor is somehow God, we can love him as God. Only then it is possible to love a being and God. What is necessary is that love should not be divided between God and other beings. Hartshorne says that the difference between the world and God should be in God. It is possible only if God is the wholeness of reality. Then it is possible to love something else and him without splitting love. If John and God were different, the act of attention concentrated on John would be a distraction from God. John would be competitive in respect to God. If God were quite different from John, that would mean that the commandment of loving God with all the heart while loving something else would be impossible to fulfill. The conclusion that Hartshorne reaches is that John has to be an aspect of God<sup>19</sup>. Hartshorne says explicitly that the neighbor has to be 'a constituent of divine life'.

At this point we can ask whether the Hartshornean interpretation of the Bible were possible if God were different in principle? Could a human being be a constituent of the divine life if it were essentially different from God? Would it be possible to say that John is somehow God if there was no essential similarity between John

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<sup>18</sup> Aquinas, *S. Th.*, I, 3, 5; *Ibid.*, I, 7, 1 ad 3.

<sup>19</sup> Hartshorne, *Creative*, pp. 148-149.

and God? Hartshorne's interpretation is panentheistical, which means that the world is included in God, where God is the unity of the world. If God were a simple unity of the world that would lead to a sure answer: there is not any difference in principle. The definition of process says that it is an inclusive being. God is also an inclusive being, which means that he is not a simple inclusion of the world. God, contrary to the world, is a subject, which means that he adds to the world one value, which the world does not have, i.e. unity. Therefore the question if the neighbor can be a constituent of divine life, because he is essentially different from God, is not so simple to answer. But the fact that John as a being can limit the divine perfection indicates that God and John are somehow similar and that they are intensively alike.

We should also keep in mind one other thing. There is no spatio – temporal difference between the world and God. According to Hartshorne time is the succession of actual beings one after another. Space is the coexistence of actual beings. God does not exist outside the world, so there is no out of the world (spatially understood) element of God. Therefore, if the world is everlasting so is God. There is not any temporal difference between the two. The notion of God is correlated to the notion of the world. Both elements are *one thing* but we can say that only God is everything and wholly other. All the things (the world) are in him.

#### Descriptions of God

When talking about the generalization of the human values that we use while describing God we should ask about the right to do so. Is it possible to use anthropological expressions to describe God, as Hartshorne does<sup>20</sup> without a tacit acknowledgment that God is not qualitatively different from the world? Hartshorne describes God using the values that are present in humans. The difference in usage is that they are present in God as an infinite degree of human values. Also all that we say about God can be used to describe humans but in a finite way. We should remember that these attributes are in God infinitively more perfect<sup>21</sup>. The fact that God has absolute features makes him an extraordinary being, which is different from the world. Only God has absolute qualities, which preserve him from being understood in terms of a human being – says Hartshorne. For example, God is wholly relative and wholly non-relative; humans are not<sup>22</sup>. But Hartshorne does not use any negation of the values that are in humans in order to describe God. He makes them only eminent (superior), which does not guarantee the essential difference of God. Kane stresses that in both cases divine transcendence is understood as excellence of nature<sup>23</sup>. Excellence should be understood as an eminent level, which is something else than the difference in principle – I would reply.

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<sup>20</sup> Hartshorne, *Man's*, p. 178.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>22</sup> Hartshorne, *Divine*, p. 32.

<sup>23</sup> R. H. Kane, *Transcendence, Temporality and Personal Identity: a Response to Ford*, in: *Hartshorne, Process Philosophy, and Theology*, ed. R. Kane, S. H. Phillips, Albany 1989, p. 170.

Examining the notions that Hartshorne uses to describe God we realize that he is using a certain form of analogy, because there is a certain similarity between God and the world. We can know literally and positively something about God. Knowing, for example, how humans love we can say by analogy how God loves. We do not know the quality of his love. The reason for that is that we do not know the actual state of God's love. Hartshorne's statements about the divine love are mostly positive. He says that God loves eminently. The reason for this is that God loves every being and humans always love a limited number of beings<sup>24</sup>. Only the divine love is perfect. We also ascribe eminence to his power and knowledge. According to Aquinas we do not know how love is present in God. We can rather say what love is not in God than how it really exists in God<sup>25</sup>. Thomism also uses analogy but the difference consists in emphasizing the negative aspects of our knowledge about values in God. The Thomistic understanding of analogy stresses mostly the difference and not similarity between God and the world. Therefore Aquinas says that God is rather different from the world than similar. God is almost incomparable to the world<sup>26</sup>. The word *almost* is very important because there is a slight similarity between them. For example: God loves out of time, unchangeably and infinitely. His love is not different from his being because God and his love are one being. The similarity to human love is very small. It is even better to say that it is dissimilar. Hartshorne rejects the negative aspect of the Thomistic descriptions of God<sup>27</sup>. A follower of Aquinas would say the reason for that is that Hartshorne rejects the difference in principle. To a Thomist, Hartshorne does not accept that God essentially differs from the world and this distinction regarding natures is important for Thomism. Hartshorne emphasizes that we do not know how God loves actually, in order to show that we do not know everything about him. But he does not show that God is inaccessible. We cannot know literally how a person in front of me loves now, because it is impossible for me to be him or her. Therefore we do not know how God loves actually. God as a concrete actuality is inaccessible, according to Hartshorne, because actuality is inaccessible. But I would say that every concrete actuality as such is inaccessible.

Hartshorne says that the categories we use to describe God can be used only in order to describe God and not the world. The described features exist in God in quite a different way. They exist in God in a superior way. Only God can be described in terms of supreme relativity and independence. That should be a proof that Hartshorne avoids ascribing to God terms, which could be used to describe other beings<sup>28</sup>. It does not seem to be convincing enough because other beings can also be described in terms of relativity and independence. The adjective *supreme* expresses the highest in

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<sup>24</sup> Sia, *God in*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>25</sup> Aquinas, *S. Th.*, I, 3 intr.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 4, 3 ad 4.

<sup>27</sup> Sia, *God in*, p. 47.

<sup>28</sup> Hartshorne, *Divine*, p. 32.

rank but not necessarily a different quality in principle. At some other point Hartshorne says that, for example, a person, who is listening to poetry is also to a certain extent independent from other pieces of poetry, which he had not listened to. Thus we can also ascribe certain relativity and independence to that person. So, we can say that this person also has a certain, i.e. lower level of absoluteness<sup>29</sup>. It is so, because all beings have an abstract and concrete element<sup>30</sup>. On the other hand, if we know that relatedness is a common quality of the whole reality that means that the whole reality cannot be divided into parts, where either there is or there is not relativity. Summing up, I can say that the qualities we ascribe to God are also present in other beings. The difference consists in the degree of the value ascribed to God and to any other being. In God they are present supremely, and he is unsurpassable in this sense. The supreme degree of the values, which are present in God, is considered by Hartshorne as sufficient reason to acknowledge that God is different in principle, with which I do not agree.

On the other hand, Hartshorne claims that one of the reasons for errors that exist in the philosophy of religion is a poor understanding of human nature. According to him, anthropology is the key to understanding reality<sup>31</sup>. Hartshorne often uses anthropological expressions in his descriptions. Let us give some examples: the notion of creative synthesis originates in the human process of cognition; the divine love is a notion based on human love; the God – world relationship is analogical to the mind – body relationship. All these concepts have their source in human experience.

We should acknowledge that one of the advantages of the Hartshornean conception of God is the possibility of more positive descriptions of God. We can ascribe to God every value that we find in the world, because the world and God are more similar to each other than different<sup>32</sup>. Ascribing these values to God we have to intensify their presence in him, saying that they reach the unsurpassable level in God. It is easier for Hartshorne than it is in classical theism to answer the question of how a given value is present in God. Is this progress in the philosophy of religion, if by progress we understand a possibility of more positive descriptions of God? Yes, there is some progress, but the price that Hartshorne is paying for it is high; God and worldly beings are very similar and this is the most striking controversy. This weakens the notion of the divine transcendence, which is reason for criticism on the part of those who do not accept the Hartshornean notion of God.

One more remark: analyzing this concept of divinity we can reach the conclusion that we can somehow know God using our senses because there is but little difference of natures. Sia, commenting on Hartshorne, partially agrees with this argument acknowledging that the world we can get in touch with is a part of the body of

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>30</sup> Sia, *God in.*, p. 42.

<sup>31</sup> Hartshorne, Ch. *Can We Understand God?*, 'Louvain Studies' 7(1978), no. 2, pp. 75-84.

<sup>32</sup> Hartshorne, *Divine*, p. 28.

God. But the sensual experience does not represent God to the whole extent and as a subject<sup>33</sup>.

### Divine beauty

Hartshorne criticizes Thomas Aquinas for his concept of God understood as pure act. Hartshorne gives beauty as an example, which should show that the notion of pure act is contradictory. Hartshorne understands beauty as a certain unity in the multiplicity of contrasts, which have been experienced by a subject<sup>34</sup>. According to the Hartshornean conception of divine beauty, all the concrete contrasts that are present in the world have to be included in God. If God were conceived as pure act that would mean that he is the unchangeable infinite fullness of beauty. If he is the unchangeable fullness of beauty that means that some possible cases of beauty have to be excluded from God, because in every actual state of the world there are some cases, which exclude some other cases of beauty. Sometimes some elements of beauty exclude each other. Therefore in every worldly sum of all the cases of beauty there are some cases, which are not included<sup>35</sup>. The conclusion is that God cannot be pure act, i.e. actually infinite<sup>36</sup>. The latter remark shows that Hartshorne understands pure act as a unity of all the possible cases of beauty even of these that exclude each other. This is so, because according to Hartshorne, God should unify all the values that are in the world (which is impossible if God were pure act). Otherwise talking about the presence of all the values in God would be fiction. The beauty of the actual world has to be somehow present in God – says Hartshorne. In Hartshorne's understanding of beauty, if God were pure act that would lead to the possession of mutually excluding values<sup>37</sup>. We can notice that Hartshorne has a quantitative understanding of the pure act. It is clear that the mentioned act could not exist, because it would be a sum of all possibilities. We notice in the interpretation of the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas presented by Hartshorne that the latter criticizes Aquinas' notion of pure act, which Aquinas understands as completely different from the beauty of the world. For Aquinas the beauty of God does not consist in enclosing all possible cases of contrasts. The divine beauty is understood as quite different from the worldly one. It is not a sum of all possible contrasts but fullness, i.e. the absolute beauty. It means that God himself is a unique example of beauty, completely different from any case of beauty in the world, which is unchangeable, simple (without any parts), nontemporal and without any limitations of harmony<sup>38</sup>. Aquinas does not understand the harmony in God as a unity of contrasts. Beauty is the divine being himself<sup>39</sup>. In

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<sup>33</sup> Sia, *God in.*, p. 26.

<sup>34</sup> Hartshorne, *Creative*, p. 303.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>37</sup> Hartshorne, *Man's*, p. 219.

<sup>38</sup> Aquinas, *S. Th.*, I, 13, 12.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 2, 3 (quarta via).

this case the divine beauty is essentially different from any particular instances of beauty in the world. Thomas Aquinas understands the difference between the beauty of the world and of God intensively and not extensively. By Hartshorne it is understood mostly extensively, therefore he has to reject the notion of pure act.

### Transcendence

Hartshorne tries to overcome the problems resulting from the classical understanding of transcendence. According to him transcendent means independent under a certain aspect and dependent under a certain aspect. Every being is somehow transcendent. For example the human body transcends the particular cells. In the human body there is an interaction between particular cells of the organism. On the other hand the whole body interacts with the all the cells of the body, which is contrary to the limited contact of the particular cells. In this aspect the body transcends the cells of the body. We can talk about the transcendence of the whole body in respect to the parts of the body. The body as a unity influences the whole body, whereas particular cells influence only some other cells. This is the positive element of the notion of transcendence, which has been forgotten<sup>40</sup> – says Hartshorne. Also in this case we have a clear example of a quantitative understanding of the difference between God and the world, where the cells are the parts of the body, which is the world. There is also a second aspect of the positive side of transcendence; i.e. independence under a certain aspect. For example, listening to somebody does not mean being completely dependent on that person. By listening to some words I can change my opinion only in some aspect, but some other ideas, which I have, still remain unchanged. On one hand, I am completely open to the new ideas; on the other hand I do not accept them. The unchanged part of my opinions is an abstract part of the concrete being, which is changeable, as the concrete always depends on other beings. Each being has both aspects<sup>41</sup> and God transcends the world in both aspects. Both aspects seem in God to be only quantitatively different from the ones worldly beings have.

Sia adds yet another example of God's transcendence. He explains that according to Hartshorne God loves more intensively than other beings. Only God himself can overcome the intensity of his own love. In this sense God is unsurpassable. Again my remark: this aspect does not show that God is different in principle from the world. It states only that God cannot lose his divinity. This element of the divine transcendence has to do with his absoluteness, i.e. the divine independence. God is independent because his is unchangeably the Supreme Being regardless of the state of other beings<sup>42</sup>. This means that God cannot lose his supremacy.

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<sup>40</sup> Hartshorne, *Creative*, pp. 230-232.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 233-234.

<sup>42</sup> Sia, *God in*, pp. 42-43.

## CONCLUSION

Why is it so important to conceive God as a being, which is essentially different from the world? The point is that God must have some features, which make him divine and not a worldly being. The conclusion I am coming to is that the only essential elements in Hartshorne's theory, which distinguish God from the world as such, are the divine unity and personality. These are values, which the world does not have. But on the other hand we find the same features in the particular elements of the world. Humans are personal and every being is a unity of some objects. God, who is also a person, contrary to any other personal being, cannot choose evil. God also lures the world to harmony. Might God be in this case superhuman? It seems that this is possible. Only the last two features distinguish the divine personality from any other personal being.

What about the notion of unsurpassability? Unsurpassability, as I see it, is rather a value, which makes God only quantitatively different from the world. It makes God different from the world but insufficiently so. There are different degrees of transcendence. The most important question is can we call *God* something, which differs so little from the world? The transcendence of God is limited merely to his unsurpassability. We should remember that eminence and worshipfulness are related to the divine unsurpassability. It is true that the Hartshornean panentheism differs from pantheism. If God by definition has to be essentially different from the world then the Hartshornean God just barely fulfills this criterion. It seems that this solution is rather closer to pantheism than to classical theism. Therefore it is not a central solution in respect to pantheism and classical theism as claimed by Hartshorne. We should remember that pantheism is often accused of being a hidden form of atheism.

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