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Review of "The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne"

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Lewis Hahn, ed., *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne*, Library of Living Philosophers, volume XX (La Salle: Illinois: Open Court, 1991).

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The Library of Living Philosophers allows great philosophers to respond to questions from their contemporaries. Since Paul A. Schilpp conceived the idea in 1938, twenty-one volumes have been published. Charles Hartshorne has contributed to eight of them, more than any other person, and now this prestigious series recognizes him. With this honor Hartshorne is admitted to a pantheon of philosophers that includes John Dewey, A. N. Whitehead, Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein, Karl Popper, Jean-Paul Sartre, W. V. O. Quine, and A. J. Ayer.

This volume is distinguished from other books on Hartshorne's philosophy by its size and scope. Included are an intellectual autobiography, twenty-nine critical essays (one of which Hartshorne translated from German), Hartshorne's replies, and a bibliography of his over five hundred publications (for the years 1938 to 1990 at least fourteen items are missing). The intellectual autobiography (3-45) and the preliminary "Reply to Everybody" (569-583) could serve as a succinct introduction to Hartshorne's life and thought.

Hartshorne never shared the positivists' aversion to metaphysics, although he was instrumental in bringing Rudolf Carnap to Chicago. Indeed, largely because of Hartshorne's work, contributors take the meaningfulness of metaphysics for granted. If there is a surprise in this volume it is the mildness of the criticisms: the tone of the essays is friendly, and the critiques require only minor revisions of his system. Hartshorne clarifies and amplifies his views in reply to searching questions from John Hospers, Sallie B. King, and Nancy Frankenberry. Robert Kane's essay on free will is a beacon of clarity, and Lewis S. Ford comes close to a definitive statement on Whitehead and Hartshorne. Ford's essay is a refreshing antidote [111] to the all-too-common perception that Hartshorne is simply "Whitehead plus the ontological argument."

A unique feature of the book is that it addresses Hartshorne's empirical studies in ornithology and psychology. Alexander F. Skutch and Lucio Chiaraviglio provide lucid assessments of Hartshorne's theory of a "monotony threshold" in song birds. Hartshorne's idea that all sensations are feelings that form an "affective continuum" is the subject of a solid historical evaluation by Wayne Viney. In the eight essays I have mentioned, and in most others (with a couple of disappointing exceptions), Schilpp's original plan for the LLP is beautifully realized.

The editor wisely includes only one paper on Hartshorne's ontological argument for God's existence. Hartshorne has convincingly shown that textbook refutations of the argument were directed at a straw man. Furthermore, preoccupation with the argument tends to eclipse Hartshorne's originality in dealing with the other questions of metaphysics. Ironically, the focus on the argument keeps Hartshorne's real reasons for believing in God out of focus. He reminds three contributors that his case for God's existence is cumulative: the ontological argument is but one component. The absence from the bibliography of "Six Theistic Proofs" (*Monist* 54/2, 1970), the only place where he makes his reasons for belief explicit, could serve as a symbol for this curious blind spot in much of the thinking about Hartshorne's theism. John B. Cobb Jr.'s article on Hartshorne's importance to theology is a welcome exception to this rule.

The book's most glaring lacuna is a failure to look at Hartshorne's ethics, particularly his views on abortion, animals, the environment, and feminism. His extensive writings on these subjects are original, stimulating, and controversial. His article "Concerning Abortion: An Attempt at a Rational View" (1981) has been reprinted in a couple of recent anthologies. Future scholars may take a hint from Daniel Dombrowski's excellent book on Hartshorne and animal rights and explore this largely untapped vein of his thought.

Hartshorne's wit and charm are evident throughout the book. When his treatment of Hegel is found inadequate, and even "embarrassing" (527), he is unapologetic: "As to the book, *The Secret of Hegel*, my comment is a quotation, 'He kept the secret'" (709). Nevertheless, in his final reply, he is more conciliatory and attempts to find common ground with Hegel (730-731). Certainly, Hartshorne cannot be faulted for "keeping the secret." As John E. Smith avers, Hartshorne does not "shoot [philosophical] arrows from a concealed position" (489). This is true, but the positivists who may still be [112] among us should be forewarned that the arrows are dipped in a potent metaphysical poison.