# PROCESS PHILOSOPHY: AN ALTERNATIVE BASIS FOR CHRISTIANS IN THE TIME OF CHANGE

*By Dr. Warayutha Sriwarakul*

The saying that old ways die hard seemed to be correct in the past, but it seems obsolete in our time which is the time of extremely rapid change. It is true that all of us experience change and cannot avoid it. Change happens everywhere not only in cities but also in villages. We may say that the only certain thing is change ifself. Though it is obvious that change is inevitable, it seems to the researcher that quite not a few people try to resist or even to stop change. Some rural developers in Thailand, especially those who are considered as conservatives, are quite worried about change that happens in the country. What seems to be their main concern is the mutual relationship among villagers. They feel that wherever electricity and water through pipes reach, brotherhood or fraternity would disappear or fade away, and it will be replaced by money instead. However, in this paper the researcher is not going to deal with the question: How should we deal with change? but with the question: What should be an appropriate basis of values in the time of rapid change?

Metaphorically speaking, the researcher agrees with Descartes when he compared physics with the trunk of a tree and metaphysics with its root. If we do not want weeds to be grown up in our garden, we need to get rid of not only their trunks, but also their roots. This implies that if their roots are not pulled out, the weeds can grow up again. Similarly, if we want to deal with bases of values, we can in no way escape from metaphysical points of view since metaphysics is a root or a basis for all values. Thus if we would like to change the world, we need to change its metaphysics. The task of philosophy is not only to understand the world but also to change it as Marx puts it: "The philosophers hitherto have only interpreted the world in various ways; the thing, however, is to change it." Since change is inevitable, we need to change our metaphysical systems in order to be compatible with this fact. The researcher believes that a metaphysical system which is closed and has no place for change would eventually die.

Historically speaking, modernity was originated in the western world. What is modernity or modernism? Monk and his associates summarize that modernization is composed of five elements: 1) urbanization 2) atomization 3)

rationalization 4) differentiation 5) institutionalization of innovative attitude.[1] But as we all well realize, for some people modernity seems to come to an end or at least needs to have a deep transformation. Modernism is severely challenged by postmodernism. Postmodernism seems to be popular in our time especially in Europe as Portoghesi puts it: "A spectre is roaming through Europe: the postmodern." But, then, what is postmodernism? It seems to the researcher that postmodernism means different things to different persons. For example, according to Lyotard, postmodernism does not refer to comback, flashback or feedback, but to analysis, anamnesis, anagogy, and anamorphosis.[2] For some people, postmodernism means the rejection of modern European theology, metaphysics, epistemology, authoritarianism and colonialism. To others, it refers to the attempt to destroy Western civilization. To others, it refers to a collection of hermeneutically obscure writers who are talking nonsensically or about nothing at all. To yet others, it refers to so many different kinds of intellectual, social, and artistic phenomena that it is a mistake to search for a single meaning applicable to all instances of the term.[3] Cahoone divides postmodernism into three types: historical, methodological, and positive.[4] Historical postmodernism argues that modernity is at an end or at least undergoes a deep transformation. Methodological postmodernism rejects the possibility of establishing the foundations of valid knowledge in a realist sense. Positive postmodernism is supposed to offer an alternative. But to the extent of his knowledge, the researcher has found no alternatives proposed by postmodern thinkers. One may say that there is at least one postmodernist who proposes an alternative to modernity, and that he is Professor Rorty. In his book Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature Rorty suggests hermeneutics to replace epistemology. But Rorty never considers himself as a postmodernist. He just accepts that he is neo-Pragmatist, so he may not be willing to accept the label as Klemm puts it : "Note that Rorty does not use the terms modern and postmodern and might very well object to them".[5] Thus if no alternatives are offered by postmodernism, Stiver seems correct when he says:

---

[1]See Robert C. Monk and associates. Exploring Religious Meaning, 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980, pp.289-291.

[2]See Jean Francois Lyotard. "Note on the Meaning of 'Post-' " in Thomas Docherty (ed). Postmodernism: A Reader. London: Harvester wheatsheaf, 1993, p.50.

[3]See Lawrence Cahoone(ed). From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996, p.1.

[4]Ibid., pp.17-18.

[5]David E. Klemm (ed.). Hermeneutical Inquiry. Vol. I. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986, p.22.

> Derrida offers no excape from the endless play of difference in texts. Foucault offers no escape from the endless play of violent power...however...The greatest value of these philosophers' work lies in its role as "ideology-critique".[6]

In this sense Professor Habermas is also correct when he considers postmodernity as a radical critique of reason and confirms that Nictzsche is a turning point.[7] So it seems to the researcher that even though postmodernism, like koans in Zen Buddhism, offers no positive alternatives, it is valuable in that it helps us start seriously reflecting on our current ideologies. If postmodernism offers no alternatives, then is there any school of thought which does so in our time? Process philosophy, the researcher believes, is one among the appropriate bases.

## II

Considering human relations, we may divide them into four kinds: ethical, moral, ecological and religious. What the researcher means by ethics here is a system of beliefs or propositions. In ethics man is related to him/herself. The central question in the domain of ethics is: "What should be the summum bonum?. " or "What should be the highest good?". Then what is morality? Morality is a code of conduct or behavior. The moral relation is between man and man. So the fundamental question in morality is : "How should man do unto others?" In ecology man is related to nature. The fundamental question is: "How should man do unto nature or the world?" In religion man is related to the transcendent which refers to God for the Christians. So the fundamantal question in religion for the Christians is: "How should man do unto God?" To see these relations clearly, we may put them in the schema as follows :

| Kinds | Relations between |
|---|---|
| 1. Ethical | man & him/herself |
| 2. Moral | man & man |
| 3. Ecological | man & nature |
| 4. Religious | man & God |

---

[6]Dan R.Stiver. The Philosophy of Religious Language. Oxford:Blackwell Publishers, 1996, p.186.

[7]See Jurgen Habermas. "The Entry into Postmodernity : Nietzsche as a Turning Point" in Thomas Docherty. Postmodernism : A Reader. London; Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993, pp. 51-60.

As we already know, the Golden Rule for all Christians is to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves. If we interpret this Golden Rule according to St. Thomas' classical theism, then we have "no place" for nature in Christianity. This means that we are expected to love only ourselves, others and God. Nature is ignored and that is the main reason why nature is "raped" by consumerist societies or by societies that adopt what Professor Kirti calls the 4th paradigm.[8] But if we interpret the rule according to Hartshorne's process philosophy, then we would have "place" for all.

# III

Hartshorne realizes that theology demands at least that God is supreme, whereas religion adds more that God must be a being worthy of worship. As he puts it: 'To discuss God is, by almost universal usage, to discuss some manner of "supreme" or "highest" or "best" individual (or superindividual) being. As a minimal definition, God is an entity somehow, superior to other entities' (Hartshorne, 1963: 323). However, in order to be adequate, theology must defend a concept of God which is able to preserve the values which religion emphasizes. Hartshorne says: "By religious value I mean the power to express and enhance reverence or worship on a high ethical and cultural level" (Hartshorne's DR, 1976: 1). Thus theology must express and enhance reverence or worship on a high ethical and cultural level, and this task of theology can be accomplished by philosophy. Hartshorne believes that only his panentheism or neoclassical theism gives a theological concept of deity which can guarantee or preserve the desired religious values.

Philosophers and theologians who discuss the concept of God are usually those who believe in God's existence. Thus instead of asking themselves or trying to answer the question whether God exists, they try to deal with other questions which come after their belief in God. Traditionally, there are five major questions concerning the concept of God: "Is God eternal? Is he temporal? Is he conscious? Does he know the world? Does he include the world?" (Hartshorne's PSG, 1953:16). The affirmative answers to these questions may be symbolized as follows:

---

[8]See Kirti Bunchua. Contextual Philosophy. Bangkok; Assumption University Press, 1992, pp. 82-104.

| | |
|---|---|
| E | Eternal - in some (or, if T is omitted, in all) aspects of his reality devoid of change, whether as birth, death, increase, or decrease |
| T | Temporal - in some (or, if E is omitted, in all) aspects capable of change, at least in the form of increase of some kind |
| C | Conscious, self-aware |
| K | Knowing the world or universe, omniscient |
| W | World-inclusive, having all things as consitituents |

Source: Hartshorne's PSG, 1953:16

Hartshorne says: "If all the five factors are asserted together, ETCKW, they define the doctrine we call "panentheism" (also "surrelativism") (Hartshorne's PSG, 1953:16). Thus we can see that Hartshorne's panentheism answers the above questions as follows: (1) Yes, God is eternal in the sense that some aspects of his reality are immutable. First, God's superiority is immutable. No matter what happens, all entities are always inferior to God. Second, though some aspects of his reality are affected by his creatures, others are not. "In this he is completely independent of any given creature" (Sia, 1985: 42). (2) Yes, God is temporal in the sense that some aspects of his reality are changeable. Whereas all his creatures may change by increasing or decreasing in value, God can only increase. God can and everlastingly does surpass himself and all other creatures. He cannot become inferior to any other creature, even to himself. (Sia, 1985:40). What God increases is his knowledge (Sia, 1985:40). God can increase his knowledge and his "aesthetic" perfectibility because "in the process view there is no final totality of definite events, but a new totality each moment" (Hartshorne, 1973:136). (3) Yes, God is conscious in that he is the maximal compound individual who has the highest degree of awareness (Hartshorne's BH,1975:172). (4) Yes, God knows the world or cosmos in the sense that he knows everything there is to know, but he knows and will know actualities as actual and potentialities as potential. Omniscience means "clear, certain, adequate knowledge whose content is all that is as it is" (Sia, 1985:68). (5) Yes, God includes the world in the sense that he is world-inclusive, having all entities as his constituents. In other words, God exceeds the world and both have always been in interaction. Answering all the five questions positively, Hartshorne could define God as "The Supreme as Eternal-Temporal Consciousness, knowing and including the world." (Hartshorne's PSG, 1953:17). In order to see how Hartshorne's panentheistic concept of God is different from its traditional rivals, let us take a quick glance at the following table:

| | |
|---|---|
| ETCKW | The Supreme as Eternal - Temporal Consciousness, Knowing and including the World. Panentheism. Plato, Sri Jiva, Schelling, Fechner, Whitehead, Igbal, Radhakrishnan |
| EC | The Supreme as Eternal Consciousness, not knowing or including the world. Aristotelian theism |
| ECK | The Supreme as Eternal Consciousness, Knowing but not including the world. Classical Theism. Philo, Augustine, Anselm, al-Ghazzali, Aquinas, Leibniz |
| E | The Supreme as the Eternal beyond consciousness and Knowledge-Emanationism. Plotinus |
| ECKW | The Supreme as Eternal Consciousness, Knowing and including the World (so far as "real"). Classical Pantheism. Sankara, Spinoza, Royce |
| ETCK | The Supreme as Eternal-Temporal Cousciousness, Knowing but not including the world. Temporalistic theism. Socinus, Lequier |
| ETCK (W) | The Supreme as Eternal-Temporal Consciousness, particularly exclusive of the World. Limited panentheism. James, Ehrenfels, Brightman |
| T (C) (K) | The Supreme as wholly Temporal or emerging Consciousness. Alexander, Ames, Cattell |
| T | The Supreme as Temporal and nonconscious: Wieman |

Source: Hartshorne's PSG, 1953:17

Regarding the relation between God and the world, the researcher would deal with only three schools from the above table: classical theism pantheism and panentheism. There are at least three assumptions which are commonly acceptable to the three schools altogether:

1. The existence of God
2. The existence of the world and its constituents
3. The relationship between God and the world

All three schools are completely in accord with God's necessary existence in spite of different senses.[9] The pair of metaphysical categories which distinctly

[9]For Hartshorne, as a panentheist, God exists necessarily in the sense that his existence is of a non-competitive sort, that is, nothing can exist instead of God. God's existence is not a possibility competing with other possibilities. For the pantheist like Spinoza God exists necessarily in the sense that God is the cause of his own existence

separates the three schools from one another is "absolute-relative." To see the differences clearly, please look at the following table.

| God's Reality / Schools | Absolute | Relative |
|---|---|---|
| Classical Theism | √ | |
| Pantheism | | √ |
| Panentheism | √ | √ |

According to classical theism, God is absolute in the sense that he is completely independent of the world. Though the world and all creatures are created by God, God and the world are totally separated. In other words, we can say that God excludes the world. The total exclusion of this kind may be shown in the form of a schema as follows:

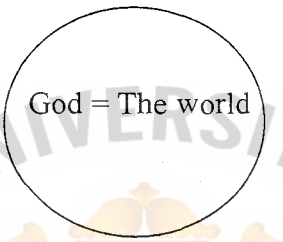

However, for the classical theist though God, who is a spirit, totally excludes the world, he "is a person without a body, who exists everywhere, that is, is omnipresent" (Swinburne, 1993:99). Moreover, though God causes everything to exist, he is absolutely free in that he is never influenced by any other creature, nor

---

(causa sui). For classical theism there are quite a few opinions. For example, for Aquinas God exists necessarily in the sense that God as pure form must exist or could not not exist. For Hick God exists necessarily in the sense that his existence does not depend on anything else. For Swinburne God exists necessarily in the senses that (1) God does not depend for his existence on himself or on anything else; (2) God exists eternally and imperishably; and (3) God exists at all moments of time since "any time at which any agent acted would be too late to bring about the non-existence of God." See Richard Swinburne. 1993. The Coherence of Theism. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp.272-8.

is by his own action at the previous time. As Swinburne puts it: "God is perfectly free in that nothing... acts from without on him to determine or in any way influence how he will act; nor does he act at one period of time so as causally to influence how he himself will act at another" (Swinburne, 1994: 128).

Pantheism, on the contrary, identifies God with the total system of all changing things and consequently denies his absolute, transcendent, or independent nature. For pantheists God includes the world in the sense that God and the world are one and the same. The following schema may make this clear.

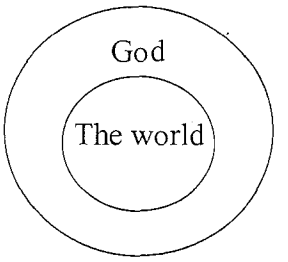



Since God and the world are identical, God is no more absolute and transcendent but relative and immanent. God, though he still can be regarded as a cause or reason, is related to all changing things in that all changing things or modes derive from him by necessity. For pantheists God, the world, and nature are just different names for one and the same substance. All other entities including human beings are just modes or accidents of the divine substance. As Spinoza says: "When I say that I mean by substance that which is conceived through and in itself; and that I mean by modification or accident that which is in something else, and is conceived through that wherein it is, evidently it follows that substance is by nature prior to its accidents. For without the former the later can neither be nor be conceived."[10]

For Hartshorne both classical theism and pantheism are unsatisfactory because both schools consider God in monopolar terms. Regarding God in monopolar terms, the classical theist and the pantheist are forced to accept only one pole of contrary attributes and disregard the other. While the classical theist considers God as abstract, absolute and transcendent, the pantheist considers him as concrete, relative and immanent. According to Hartshorne, both classical theism and pantheism could not arrive at the most comprehensive concept of God. Unlike classical theism and pantheism, his panentheism or neoclassical theism can include both poles of contrary metaphysical categories. Panentheism can include "absolute-relative", "transcendent-immanent" and "abstract-concrete" within God

[10]See Roger Scruton. 1986. Spinoza. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 35-52.

's nature. To compare panentheism with the other two, let us take a look at the following schema.




Accord to panentheism, God includes the world, not in the sense that God and the world are identical, but in the sense that God exceeds or is greater than the world. For Hartshorne only his panentheism can solve all the problems that confront classical theism and pantheism. Considering God's absoluteness, we may divide it into three views: (1) God is absolute in all aspects; (2) God is absolute in some aspects; and (3) God is absolute in no aspects. While (1) and (3) are extreme, (2) is not. (1) and (3) are the views of classical theism and pantheism respectively. (2) is the Hartshornian view. Hartshorne rejects classical theism and pantheism because they both lead to unsolvable problems. Classical theism, on the one hand, fails to describe the relation between God and the world consistently. Hartshorne argues that "If, then, God is wholly absolute,... it follows that God does not know or love or will us, his creatures" (Hartshorne's DR, 1976:16). Since to know or to love means to be influenced, if God loves the world, then he is influenced by the world. If God is influenced by the world, then he is not totally absolute. But for classical theism God is totally absolute; therefore, he is not influenced by the world. Then it follows that God does not know or love the world. Hence if God knows or loves us, then he is not totally absolute as the classical theist understands. On the other hand, pantheism fails to grasp the aspect of God which is absolute in the sense that some of his attributes are not influenced by or independent of all other creatures, for example, his power and his goodness. Hartshorne says: "The error of most pantheists have been to denied the externality of concrete existence to the essence of deity. They have not realized that the inclusive actuality of God, which includes all de facto actuality, is as truly contingent and capable of additions as the least actuality it includes" (Hartshorne's DR, 1976:89). Hartshorne, then, develops his panentheistic concept of God. His thesis is that God has two aspects, one abstract and the other concrete, and that divine perfection applies to both but in ways appropriate to each. Hartshorne summarizes:

> If "pantheism" is a historically and etymologically appropriate term for the view that deity is the all of relative or interdependent items, with nothing wholly independent or in any clear sense nonrelative, then "panentheism" is an appropriate term for the view that deity is

> in some real aspect distinguishable from and independent of any and all relative items, and yet, taken as an actual whole, includes all relative items. Traditional theism or deism makes God solely independent or noninclusive. Thus there are logically the three views: (1) God is merely the cosmos, in all aspects inseparable from the sum or system of dependent things or effects; (2) He is both this system and something independent of it; (3) He is not the system, but is in all aspects independent. The second view is panentheism. The first view includes any doctrine which, like Spinoza's, asserts that there is a premise from which all acts are implied conclusions... Panentheism agrees with traditional theism on the important point that the divine individuality, that without which God would not be God, must be logically independent, that is, must not involve any particular world (Hartshorne's DR, 1976:89-90).

In order to understand Hartshorne's panentheism clearly, we may compare it with some theory in the history of physical optics. In analogy, classical theism may be assumed to parallel Newton's Opticks which taught that light was material corpuscles. On the other hand, pantheism may be assumed to parallel a paradigm that derived ultimately from the optical writings of Young and Fresnel in the early nineteenth century which taught that light was transverse wave motion. While the first two schools seize upon one set of contrastive attributes and disregard the other, Hartshorne's panentheism, paralleling quantum physics which holds that light is photons that exhibit some characteristics of waves and some of particles,[11] is the synthesis of the two sets of contrastive attributes. In his own words, Hartshorne says:

> As the long argument between those who said that light was corpuscular and those who said it was a set of waves seems, in our time, to have ended with the admission that it is both, in each case with qualifications; so the longer argument between those who said, "There is nothing higher than relative being (and thus either there is no God or he is relative)," and those who said, "There is a highest being who is absolute," is perhaps to be ended by showing a way in which both statements may consistently be made (Hartshorne's DR, 1948:x).

Thus Hartshorne's panentheistic concept of God is the most comprehensive among its rivals. The absolute aspect and the concrete aspect make God become dipolar. For Hartshorne surrelativism and panentheism are the same doctrine with

---

[11]See Thomas S, Kuhn. 1970. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago: The Universitiy of Chicago Press, pp.11-12.

only a difference of emphasis (Hartshorne's DR, 1976: 90). "The main thesis, called Surrelativism, also Panentheism, is that the "the relative" or changeable, that which depends upon and varies with varying relationships, includes within itself and in value exceeds the nonrelative, immutable, independent, or "absolute," as the concrete includes and exceeds the abstract" (Hartshorne's DR, 1976: ix). From this doctrine, 'It follows that God, as supremely excellent and concrete, must be conceived not as wholly absolute or immutable, but rather as supremely-relative, "surrelative," although, or because of this superior relativity, containing an abstract character or essence in respect to which, he is indeed strictly absolute and immutable' (Hartshorne's DR, 1976: ix).

The researcher thinks that Hartshorne's law of diporality is so central that to defend it means to defend panentheism itself. And this law is considered one of the most distinctive contributions Hartshorne ever made to philosophy. As Allan puts it: "Hartshorne's axiom of dipolar divinity is surely his most distinctive, and most controversial, contribution to philosophy. He follows Whitehead's lead, but has elaborated the notion and its implications on ways that carry him far beyond the brief obiter dicta of his sometime mentor. The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God, his first book-length presentation of the matter, has rightly become a classic in the philosophy of religion" (Allan, 1986:293). The law of dipolarity paves the way for panentheism to overcome the dilemma confronted by both classical theism and pantheism. In panentheism God is immanent in and includes the world of changing, dependent entities, and is simultaneously an absolute, independent pole which transcends the world.

## IV

Now the resrarcher would like to consider advantages panentheism has over its rivals. The researcher believes that panentheism has at least four main advantages over its rivals.

First, Hartshorne's panentheistic concept of God seems to be compatible with modern physics which holds a view of the world very similar to the views held by Eastern mystics. According to Eastern mystics - no matter they are Hindus, Buddhists or Taoists - all entities and events perceived by the senses are interdependent and are nothing but different aspects or modes of the same ultimate reality (Capra, 1983: 24). Whereas the classical physicist or the Newtonian has seen the world as a multitude of separate objects and events, the modern physicist "has come to see the world as a system of inseparable, interacting and ever-moving components with the observer being an integral part of this system" (Capra, 1983: 25). In other words, whereas the classical physicist has seen the world as

"mechanic," the modern physicist has seen it as "organic" (Capra, 1983: 24). Correspondingly, whereas the classical theist has seen God as a ruler who directs the world from above, the Hartshornian views "God as the Fellow-Traveler" who promises to be with his creatures forever (Aquino, 1994: 6). In other words, whereas the classical theist views God as "absolutely independent," Hartshorne views God as "social" (Hartshorne's DR, 1976: 25). Hartshorne, unlike the classical theist, holds that God is not outside reality since God as social includes the world which has reciprocal interaction with him, but simultineously, unlike the pantheist, he does not identify God with the world since there is so much that is evil and unholy in the world. The panentheistic concept of God seems to be compatible with the concept of God appearing in Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad ( 3.7.15):

> He who, dwelling in all things,
> Yet is other than all things,
> Whom all things do not know,
> Whose body all things are,
> Who controls all things from within-
> He is your Soul, the Inner Controller,
> The Immortal.

Surprisingly, Hartshorne's panentheism and Capra's Tao of physics seem to go hand in hand. Both doctrines argue against Greek atomism and Newtonian mechanism. Both Hartshorne and Capra do not agree with the Greek atomists who drew a clear line between spirit and matter, picturing matter as being made of several "basic building blocks." For the Greek atomists the basic building blocks or atoms are purely passive and intrinsically dead particles moving in the void (Capra, 1983: 21) while for Hartshorne atoms are "living" entities which have freedom or creativity like all other sentient creatures. Thus Hartshorne is not reluctant to comment:

> There is another lesson to be drawn from Greek atomism. This is that the Greek bias in favor of being as more basic than becoming expressed itself not only in Parmenides' denial of real change, in Plato's exaltation of his eternal forms, or Aristotle's doctrine of the Unmoved Mover (or his denial of evolution) but equally in the origins of materialism. Only Heraclitus among the Greeks saw what countless Buddhists in Asia saw (though the Mahayana branch of Buddhism seriously compromised the insight), the primacy of becoming. And Greek thinkers could not quite assimilate becoming into their total view, though Plato and Aristotle tried to do that very thing (Hartshorne's IOGT, 1983: 19).

Hartshorne has developed panpsychism and panentheism through the adoption of becoming or process. In a process view, experience is always of experience. As he puts it:

> Process is experiencing, mostly in nonhuman forms, but including the eminent form. Experiencing always has data or things experienced. In a process view, concrete data can only be other processes, other experiences. Experience is always of experience or "feeling of feeling." I held some such view long before I knew about Whitehead (Hartshorne, 1973: 130).

God as an eminent experience or process includes all other experiences or processes. The relation between God and his creatures is, hence, genuinely internal. The way God as social includes the world and all creatures is like the way the living body includes its living cells. God and his creatures interact with each other the same way as the living body has interaction with its living cells. That is the reason why Hartshorne considers God as Creator-Creature. This view is compatible with the view of modern physics which parallels to the views of Eastern mystics. As Capra puts it:

> In modern physics, the universe is thus experienced as a dynamic, inseparable whole which always includes the observer in an essential way. In this experience, the traditional concepts of space and time, of isolated objects, and of cause and effect, lose their meaning. Such an experience, however, is very similar to that of the Eastern mystics. The similarity becomes apparent in quantum and relativity theory, and becomes even stronger in the "quantum-relativistic" models of subatomic physics where both these theories combine to produce the most striking parallels to Eastern mysticism (Capra, 1983: 81).

Second, when comparing with its rivals, Hartshorne's panentheism conforms to the most rigorous logical analysis. It seems to the researcher that Hartshorne's concept of God is the result of a long evolution of human understanding of God. As already mentioned, Hartshorne has been deeply influenced by Whitehead. If it is the case that Whitehead has come so far on the concept of deity, then Hartshorne has come further. In order to see how far the evolution of the divine concept has come through Whitehead, let us consider Hartshorne's remarks as follows :

> Whitehead... knew fairly well what the Church Fathers had had to say on the subject; he was also acquainted with Plato's and Aristotle 's ideas of deity, and the views of Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume, and Bradley. He had some knowledge of Hindu, Buddhist,

> and Chinese religious thought. As a son of a Church of England clergyman (and brother of a bishop) he doubtless knew what "God" usually meant to churchgoers and was familiar with the Scriptures. He had done some reading in the anthropology of religion ... Thus he was to a considerable extent on his own in working out an alternative to the standard metaphysical concept of deity as it had prevailed for about 18 centuries, to some extent since Aristotle (Hartshorne's WVR,1981:11).

Hartshorne has come further than Whitehead in that it is Hartshorne who made the full elaboration of a philosophical theology and resolved some unresolved problems in Whitehead's theism.[12] Both Whitehead and Hartshorne view classical theism and pantheism as the two extremes. Both of them realize that the two extremes finally confront with unresolvable difficulties. Whereas the classical theist faces the problem of God's supremacy, the pantheist with the problem of God's personality. Hartshorne, hence, suggests the law of polarity, which he says he has taken over from Morris Cohen (Hartshorne's PSG, 1953:2). According to this law, "ultimate contraries are correlatives, mutually interdependent, so that nothing real can be described by the wholly one-sided assertion of (ultimate categories such as) simplicity, being, actuality and the like, each in a "pure" form, devoid and independent of complexity, becoming, potentiality and related categories" (Hartshorne's PSG, 1953:2). This law maintains that the two poles stand or fall together. Neither pole is to be denied or regarded as unreal. If either pole is real, the contrast itself is also real. (Sia, 1985:46). However, the two poles are asymmetrical: what is concrete includes what is abstract, and not vice versa. Consequently, metaphysical categories as exemplified by concrete realities are always to be found in pairs. No concrete individual is merely simple, it is also complex. There is no such thing just as an effect. The same entity is, in another aspect, also a cause. No concrete entity can be merely considered as necessary, for in a different context it can be also considered as contingent (Sia, 1985: 46). In application of this law to God Hartshorne can describe God in dual terms such as "relative-absolute", "contingent-necessary", "effect-cause", "chageable-unchangeable", "time-eternity." The law of polarity or the principle of dual transcendence places God not on either side of the metaphysical contraries but on both sides. This law makes Hartshorne's logical analysis the most rigorous when comparing with those of the classical theist and the pantheist. Whereas the other two schools regard only one pole of the contraries as superior to its correlative, and neglect the inferior pole, the Hartshornian regards both poles as real. In terms of Hegelian logic Hartshorne's panentheism may be considered as synthesis whereas

---

[12]See Charles Hartshorne & Creighton Peden. (1981). Whitehead's View of Reality. New York : The Pilgrim Press, pp. 21-24.

classical theism and pantheism may be considered as thesis and antithesis respectively. But this must not make us misunderstand for Hartshorne's principle of dual transcendence is not identical to Hegel's dialectical logic. As Hubbeling puts it: "The relation between the two contrasts is not that of a conjunction, but that of an inclusion: not A and B, but A in B" (Hubbeling, 1991:359). In terms of Peircean categories, to which Hartshorne may prefer, Hartshorne's panentheism may be regarded as Thirdness (generality) while classical theism and pantheism as Firstness (quality) and Secondness (reaction) respectively. To see this clearly, we may put their views into a schema as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Firstness | : God as the absolute (Classical theism) |
| Secondness | : God as the relative ( Pantheism) |
| Thirdness | : God as the absolute in the relative ( Panentheism) |

Hartshorne's principle of dual transcendence, in some sense, seems compatible with Taoist logic which holds that the two poles are interdependent.[13]

Third, Hartshorne's panentheism conforms to the new metaphysics of time. It is not exaggerated to assume that the Christian tradition is the outcome of Jerusalem and Athens. Most (if not all) Christian thinkers agree that we have a supernatural knowledge revealed by God, though they are not at all of one accord in the contribution of natural knowledge (Miller, 1972: 119). In terms of natural knowledge, the notion of time is no exception. It was some early Greek philosophers who established the dichotomy between change and permanence and identified change with time and permanence with timelessness. This view of time also established the distinction between substances as permanent and accidents as contingent and changeable (Baltazar,1973:147). The classical theist views time as the Greeks did. According to Greek philosophy time was seen as negative. It was not thought of as evolutionary or productive. "Rather, things are destroyed in time, which is therefore negative" (Baltazar,1973:149). Plato viewed time as unreal because it is just a "moving image of eternity."[14] For Plato things in time are mere shadows or copies of the eternal ideas or forms which are empty of contingency and change. For Aristotle time can be regarded as a numbering process associated

---

[13]See Arthur Waley. 1987. The Way and Its Power. London: George Allen & Unwin, pp. 143-144.

[14]See Plato. 1983. Timaeus and Critias, 37 d. Trans. by Desmond Lee. Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., p.51.

with our perception of "before" and "after" in motion and change.[15] Aristotle realized that the relation between time and change is a reciprocal one: without change time could not be recognized, whereas without time change could not occur (Whitrow,1988:42). In Plotinus' metaphysics, the sensible world is derived by a fall from the One, and time is nothing but the measure of this degradation (Baltazar,1973:149). Even though there was no uninque Greek idea of time, the Greeks viewed time as negative. Since time was viewed as essentially negative and contingent, it would be contrary to the nature of God. Hence God's eternity would have to be thought of as the absence from time or timelessness not as endless time (Baltazar,1973:150). Similarly, for classical theism " God is eternal" always means "God is timeless." Hartshorne agrees with this notion of eternity. But he distinguishes between eternity and immortality. Whereas eternity is identical to timelessness, immortality is the same as everlastingness. In contrast to the Greek view of time, Hartshorne, like other modern thinkers, regards time as positive and evolutionary. He uses the modern notion of time with God's concrete aspect. Since time is positive and evolutionary, "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is less concrete than our God now" (Hartshorne,1973: 133). For Hartshorne whereas pastness is determinate actual reality, future events are indeternate potential reality. "The future is the as-yet-uncreated, the partly unsettled or indefinite, that concerning which choices are decisions still to be made, and even now in part are being made. Of course, therefore, the future lacks the full reality or definiteness of the past" (Hartshorne,1967: 251). But this does not mean that there is nothing at all determinate about it. There must be some determinateness, or else there will be chaos. The determinateness of the future is caused by "will-be's" and "will-not- be 's." The nearer the future is to us the more determinate it appears. "That is the reason why at times the future can be predicted, since there are laws which ... can be observed as having occurred in the past yet have application to the future" (Sia, 1985: 63-64). Hartshorne maintains that time unites determinate, actual past reality with indeterminate, potential future reality. Thus it would appear that the past is indestructible or immortal. In appliacation of this notion of time to God, it follows that God knows more at any one moment than at the preceding moment. That is the reason why he says that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is less concrete than our God now.

Unhappy with Hartshorne's application of the new notion of time to God, the classical theist would argue against it. Even though contemporary classical theists realize that: "Because the thought pattern of modern man is historical and evolutionary a relevant theology today must adopt the evolutionary pattern of thought" (Baltazar, 1973: 145), they certainly do not hesitate to argue:

---

[15]See Aristotle. Physics IV.222b. 1941. The Basic Works of Aristotle. Trans. by Richard Mckeon. New York: Random House.

> The process philosophers and theologians of the Whiteheadean tradition... speak of the temporality of God... To speak thus is closer to the view of the Scriptures than is the Hellenic view of God's atemporality. Unfortunately, these thinkers equate temporality with finitude, growth, and contingency, so that God is said to grow... Consequently, in predicating temporality of God, they are forced to hold that God grows and is contingent, while at the same time holding his ontological priority as the infinite and the absolute (Baltazar, 1973: 153-154).

What the classical theist is afraid is God's growth since the divine growth implies his non-absoluteness in the classical sense. But this is a misunderstanding. For Hartshorne even though God is changing in some aspects, he is still absolute. We must not forget that God for Hartshorne is dipolar. While his concrete pole is relative, i.e., changing and related to his creatures, his abstract pole is absolute. By absoluteness Hartshorne means immutability and independence. There are some aspects in God which do not change. First, God's superiority is immutable. He remains superior to all other creatures, no matter what. And since God is not only actually but also logically superior, his superiority is one in principle (Sia, 1985: 42). Second, God's capacity to be affected by his creatures does not preclude him from having attributes which are unaffected. In this sense he is completely independent of all other creatures (Sia, 1985: 42). Hence, when Hartshorne says " God grows," what he means is merely:

> God can increase in value simply by acquiring new content in the awareness with which he enjoys the new world-states as they come into being. He is not stronger or better or holier, but only richer in experienced content. The gain is aesthetic, not ethical or in power (Hartshorne, 1973: 119).

Fourth, Hartshorne's panentheism can guarantee and preserve the values upon which religion insists. The values upon which religion insists are divine love and goodness. Hartshorne believes that both classical theism and pantheism cannot guarantee and preserve these values. It seems obvious that pantheism fails to preserve these values at the outset since the pantheist God is regarded as impersonal. In other words, the pantheistic God is not the God of religion at all. As Ellwood puts it:

> Better, according to impersonalists, to understand God as pure being and consciousness without the hindrance of personality - let the Absolute be like an unstained mirror, out of which all things rise and fall, itself untouched by their vicissitudes (Ellwood, 1978: 153).

But God in the Judaeo- Christian - Islamic tradition is personal. Therefore, the personal monotheist "can speak of God as having a sense of purpose, as loving, as being the eternal friend" (Ellwood, 1978, p.153). The personal monotheistic view of God is closer to the view of the Scripture which holds "God is love," (I John 4:8) than the pantheistic view is. Both Hartshorne and the classical theist are personal monotheists, so they both agree that God is personal. But, as we have already seen there is a significant difference between their views of God. While the classical theist holds that God is a person (Swinburne 1994: 126), Hartshorne maintains that God is but a social person or compound individual. Since Hartshorne and the classical theist see God differently, they see divine love differently. Since the classical theist views God as absolute in all aspects, she has to make a distinction between earthly love and heavenly love. God's love is heavenly love which is "like the sun's way of doing good which benefits the myriad forms of life on earth but receives no benefits from the good it produces." But this, the researcher thinks, is quite a misunderstanding. As a matter of fact, even though the sun is considered as the center of the solar system, it both affects and is affected by the earth and all other planets which are its subordinates. It happens the same to God. If God is absolute in all aspects as the classical theist thinks, he will never be able to love his creatures since "to love" means "to be influenced by." So even though God is supreme like the sun, he is influenced by his creatures if he loves them. For Hartshorne love is "defined as social awareness" (Hartshorne's DR, 1976: 36). He understands love as adequate awareness of the value of others. Thus God's love is essentallly social. Hartshorne says :

> The dilemma appears final: either value is social, and then its perfection cannot be wholly within the power of any one being, even God; or it is not social at all, and then the saying "God is love" is an error (Hartshorne, 1963: 327).

For classical theism it is certain that God's love is not social, i.e., not be influenced by his creatures. From this it follows that God's love is not love at all. To see this clearly, we may put the argument into a syllogism as follows:

> All love is social.
> God's love (for classical theism) is not social.
> Therefore, God's love (for classical theism) is not love at all.

Now let us turn to the other value, namely, God's goodness. According to Hick, in the New Testament God's goodness, love, and grace are all nearly synonymous, and the most typical of the three terms is love (Hick, 1990:11). Here the researcher separates divine goodness from love in order to discuss the problem of evil clearly. Regarding the problem of evil, the researcher feels that both classical theism and pantheism cannot guarantee and preserve God's goodness. It

is the problem of evil which has created insoluble difficulties for all theists except process thinkers. This problem has been an important tool for atheists to argue against the existence of God. Since it is obvious that evils, both moral and natural, exist, the atheists conclude that God does not exist. Both theists and atheists accept the existence of evils. However, the difference between them is that for theists the proposition "God exists" is compatible with the proposition "Evil exists," but not for atheists. The problem of evil may be used to argue against pantheism in the form of syllogism as follows :

The world contains a great deal of evil.
God is the world.
Therefore, God contains a great deal of evil.

If God contains a great deal of evil, then he is not perfectly good. If God is not perfectly good, then he is not worthy of worship. It is true that the world contains a great deal of evil. From this it would finally lead to the conclusion that the pantheistic God is not worthy of worship. Similarly, the problem of evil may be used to challenge classical theism as follows:

If God is perfectly good, God must wish to abolish all evils.
But evils exitst.
Therefore, God is not perfectly good.

If God is not perfectly good, then he is not worthy of worship. It is true that evils exist. Hence from this it follows that the classical God is not worthy of worship. The researcher thinks that in so far as God is regarded as absolute in all aspects and creates the world out of nothing, the above argument does not seem to be refuted. Classical theism always considers God as absolute in all aspects who creates the world out of nothing. Therefore, it seems difficult for classical theists to refute the above argument.

Some people think that the problem of evil could also challenge Hartshorne 's panentheism. They may argue, as we have already seen, as follows:

If God includes the world, then he includes imperfect entities.
If God includes imperfect entities, then he is imperfect.
If God is imperfect, then he is not worthy of worship.
God includes imperfect entities.
Therefore, he is imperfect and so not worthy of worship.

The above argument sounds correct, but indeed it does not. The proposition "If God includes imperfect entities, then he is imperfect" is not true. If "God includes the world" means the same thing as "God is the world," then the

proposition will be true. For if God is the world and the world is imperfect, then we can deduce that God is imperfect. But "God includes the world" is not identical with "God is the world." Therefore, we cannot deduce that God is imperfect. For Hartshorne "God includes the world" means "God exceeds the world", as he puts it:

> One important reason for not giving up the notion that God literally contains the universe is derived from the theory of value. If A contains the value of B and also some additional value, then the value of A exceeds that of B. This is perhaps the only assumption that makes "better" self-evident (Hartshorne's DR, 1976: 90).

According to Hartshorne, "God includes the world" does not mean "God creates the world out of nothing." Hartshorne believes that God is "not before but with" the world. Like God, all creatures even atoms have freedom or creativity. If evils happen, then it is their responsibilities, not God's. Thus freedom is considered as the root of all evil and all good. Hartshorne argues:

> The root of evil, suffering, misfortune, wickedness, is the same as the root of all good, joy, happiness, and that is freedom, decision making. If, by a combination of good management and good luck, X and Y harmonize in their decisions, the AB they bring about may be good and happy; if not, not. To attribute all good to good luck, or all to good management, is equally erroneous. Life is not and cannot be other than a mixture of the two. God's good management is the explanation of there being a cosmic order that limits the scope of freedom and hence of chance-limits, but does not reduce to zero. With too much freedom, with nothing like laws of nature (which, some of us believe, are divinely decided and sustained), there could be only meaningless chaos; with too little, there could be only such good as there may be in atoms and molecules by themselves, apart from all higher forms. With no creaturely freedom at all, there could not even be that, but at most God alone, making divine decisions- about what? It is the existence of many decision makers that produces everything, whether good or ill. It is the existence of God that makes it possible for the innumerable decisions to add up to a coherent and basically good world where opportunities justify the risks. Without freedom, no risks -and no opportunities (Hartshorne's OOTM, 1984: 18).

As already mentioned before, evil, suffering and ambiguity can be justified as necessary conditions for morality to be significant. The definition of evil as a privation of goodness, as proposed by St. Augustine, is acceptable to not

only classical theists, but also pantheists and panentheists. It seems to the researcher that among theists, no matter they are classical theists, pantheists or panetheists, the problem of evil has never diminished their belief in God's existence. All theists or believers have a common contention that God's existence is compatible with the presence of evil. Thus the theists or believers usually sympathize with one another on the problem of evil. But this never happens to atheists. Both theists and atheists are competing rivals who never sympathize with each other. Whereas the theists hold a "conjunction" of God and evil, the atheists hold an "either-or" between the two. Surely, the atheists reject the existence of God and accept the presence of evil. And as we have just seen, the atheists can challenge or even refute divine goodness according to pantheism and classical theism by the problem of evil. Thus among the three schools only Hartshorne's panentheism can guarantee and preserve divine love and divine goodness from the attack of the problem of evil. In summary, Hartshorne's panentheism has advantages over pantheism and classical theism no matter whether we make our judgment from physics, logic, metaphysics or philosophy of religion.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY


Allan, George. "The Metaphysical Axioms and Ethics of Charles Hartshorne." Review of Metaphysics, 40, December, 1986, pp.271-304.

Aquino, Ranhilio C. 1994. "Hick and Process Philosophy on the Reality of God." A Paper Presented in the International Conference on Philosophy and Culture. Held on March 29-31, 1994. Manila: Asian Association of Catholic Philosophers, pp. 1-8.

Aristotle. Physics IV. 222b. 1941. The Basic Works of Aristotle. Trans. by Richard Mckeon. New York: Random House.

Baltazar, Eulalio. "Evolutionary Perspectives and the Divine." In George F. McLean. ed. 1973. Traces of God in a Secular Culture. New York: Alba House, pp. 143-165.

Cahoone, Lawrence (ed). From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Authology. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

Capra, Fritjof. 1983. The Tao of Physics. 2nd ed. Boston: New Science Library, 1983.

Ellwood, Robert S., Jr. 1978. Introducing Religion From Inside and Outside. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice - Hall.

Habermas, Jurgen. "The Entry into Postmodernity : Nietzsche as a Turning Point" in Thomas Docherty. Postmodernism : A Reader. London; Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993, pp. 51-60.

Hartshorne, Charles. "Alternative Conceptions of God." (From MV). In William P. Alston. ed. 1963. Religious Belief and Philosophical Thought. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., pp. 320 - 338.

_____. Beyond Humanism: Essays in the New Philosophy of Nature (BH). Gloucester: Peter Smith, (1937) 1975.

_____. The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God (DR). New Haven: Yale University Press, (1948) 1976.

_____. Insights and Oversights of Great Thinkers: An Evaluation of Western Philosophy (IOGT). Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983.

_____. Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes (OOTM). Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984.

_____ and William L. Reese. eds. Philosophers Speak of God (PSG) (ed. with William L. Reses). Chicago : Chicago University Press, 1953.

_____. "Process and the Nature of God." In George F. Mchean. ed. (1973). Traces of God in a Secular Culture. New York: Alba House, pp. 117-141.

_____. "Religion in Process Philosophy." In J. Clayton Feaver and William Horosz. eds. 1967. Religion in Philosophical and Cultural Perspective. New Delhi: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, pp. 246-268.

_____ and Creighton Peden. Whitehead's View of Reality (WVR). (with Creighton Peden). New York: The Pilgrim Pres. 1981.

Hick, John. 1990. Philosophy of Religion. 4th ed. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Hubbeling, H.G. "Hartshorne and the Ontological Argument." in Levis E. Hahn. ed. The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne: the Labrary of Living Philosophers. Lasalle: Open Court. 1991. pp.355-376.

Jones, Alexander. 1966. The Jerusalem Bible. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.

Kirti Bunchua. Contextual Philosophy. Bangkok; Assumption University Press, 1992.

Klemm, David E.(ed.). Hermeneutical Inquiry. Vol. I. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986.

Kuhn, Thomas S. 1970. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Lyotard Jean Francois. "Note on the Meaning of 'Post-' " in Thomas Docherty(ed). Postmodernism: A Reader. London: Harvester wheatsheaf, 1993, p.50.

Miller, Ed. L. 1972. God and Reason. New York :The Macmillan Company.

Monk, Robert C. and associates. Exploring Religious Meaning, 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980.
Sia, Santiago. 1985. God in Process Thought. Dordrecth: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
Stiver, Dan R. The Philosophy of Religious Languge. Oxford:Blackwell Publishers. 1996.
Swinburne, Richard. 1994. The Christian God. Oxford : Clarendon Press.
_____. 1993. The Coherence of Theism. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Waley, Arthur. 1987. The Way and Its Power. London: George Allen & Unwin.
Whitrow, G. T. 1988. Time in History. Oxford: Oxford University Press.