

# Process Perspectives

*a relational worldview for the common good*

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## Process Perspectives

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# An Interview With Mary Elizabeth Moore

*This interview was conducted by June Watkins on October 14th, after Mary Elizabeth moved to Atlanta, where she is now on the faculty of the Candler School of Theology at Emory University.*

**JW:** It has been said that you are a person who lives and works in intersections. On what intersections do you find yourself? What do you think draws you to the intersections? What do you find there?

**MEM:** Yes, I think this is an appropriate description of my life. Growing up as an only child of a mother and father who were very different from one another, I learned early to negotiate difference and make home “in the middle.” My parents were from different cultural backgrounds and had quite distinctive personalities. I loved them both; the challenge was to live with the pull to be more like one or the other. I also grew up in the segregated South, where, from an early age, I was horrified by the injustices and forced separation of races that were taken for granted. That made a deep impression.

The intersections where I live now are interdisciplinary, intercultural, interpersonal, and inter-institutional. These are all challenging because I constantly need to seek and articulate my center. My center is always on the borders of knowledge and human relationships, which is difficult to comprehend, sustain, or explain to others. My center is more than marginal, however; it is a passion for *tikkun olam*—repair of the world. I am drawn to intersections as places of meeting—rich with possibilities for people to work together in repairing the torn fabric of the planet. I believe that mystical forces meet us in those intersections (read initial aim)—inspiring, pulling, and working alongside us to repair the rips and tears of this hurting world. Thus, in the face of injustice and oppression among people, destruction of ecosystems, schisms in thinking, and violence erupting from these abuses, I think we need the wisdom and collegiality of others if we are to make a positive contribution (even a small one) to the world.



*Mary Elizabeth Moore at her farewell luncheon in Claremont in July*

The **interdisciplinary intersections** of my work cross theology (systematics), education, and social psychology. For this reason, I identify myself as a practical theologian, which is itself an integrative discipline. To give you a sense of what this means, I am presently working on a book—*Teaching as Sacrament*—that combines ecclesiology with education. I am

also working on *The Future Church*, a feminist practical-theological ecclesiology. Alongside these major projects, I still yearn to publish my 12 years of ethnographic research on youth and culture; thus, I am working with a couple of students and colleagues to update the research and reshape the project. Finally, I am in the early stages of planning a research project with an Emory colleague in anthropology, studying the dynamics of educational institutions that take major steps toward sustainability, justice and regeneration. You can see from this list that patterns exist, but every project stands on a bridge across disciplines. This is why I have had some difficulty with publishing, as with the youth project. The completed book was neither sociology of religion, nor theology, nor education; it was all three woven together.

**Intercultural work** is also important to me, emerging from my past as a white, Southern woman, and from the delight and challenge of living cross-culturally for 30 years on the U.S.-Mexican Border and the Pacific Rim. Every course I teach and every book I write are shaped by this consciousness, and influenced by authors and friends from diverse cultures—cultures defined by ethnicity, gender, region, class, and age. In recent years, I have been particularly committed to cooperative planning in intercultural work: conferences, the Multicultural Center at Claremont, and church workshops

and seminars. In my new home at Emory, this work continues; the Black Church Studies (BCS) program is linked with the program I direct, Women in Theology and Ministry (WTM). This collaboration is one of the most rewarding aspects of my new job. We are presently working, also, with the Director of Christian Education on a Justice and Reconciliation Project. This promises to be a fruitful collaboration, even as we face tensions and issues within the Emory and Atlanta communities. The Project holds considerable promise for *tikkun olam*.

**Interpersonally**, I live on bridges as well—bridges crossing age spans, the peculiarities and joys of a blended family, my friends who are intellectuals and my friends who hate books, my friends who are deeply religious and my friends who are deeply suspicious and critical of religion. One of the challenges of such “bridge living” is that I belong in many communities and in none. I am sometimes overwhelmed by the power of these relationships, and I am sometimes very lonely.

Finally, I live on **inter-institutional bridges**, especially bridges across academic guilds, between guilds and theological schools, between theological schools and the church and university, and across diverse religious communities. I love this role, and it is exhausting. What I learn is incredible as I work in a Jewish community or engage in an interreligious dialogue. The fresh insights are also incredible as I plan an Association of Practical Theology conference working alongside with students in preparing Women’s Week at Candler. At the same time, I am reading a dissertation from Claremont and collaborating with colleagues in South Africa, Germany, Wales and Australia. I could name a thousand ways that each of these works informs the others, but like the girl trying to make 1000 paper cranes to bring back her health, I will likely die before all 1000 connections are made. Others can carry on in their own unique ways!

**JW: Who were your major influences?**

**MEM:** I have named my parents, and their influence has been grounded in deep and compassionate love (as close to unconditional as people can get). I must quickly add my children (Cliff, Rebecca, Glenda, Joyce, and Nan) and my husband, Allen. My family has been nourishing and demanding and humbling; most of all, they have been loving and have given me the privilege of letting me love them. Alongside my nuclear family are some wonderful women who loved me into being—my Aunt Shush, Mary, and Nita. They are all my second mothers; they accepted me as I was and taught me to laugh at my-

self.

I have been strangely bereft of women mentors in academic and professional life, largely because I have often traveled where women have not been before. Also, the women who did travel ahead of me were loaded with others’ expectations and demands that required much strength and effort to survive and thrive. As a girl growing up in Louisiana, the teachers and leaders usually adopted the boys to guide and encourage. Even people like Mrs. Sandifer and Miss Brown, who encouraged me greatly, did not know how to support and guide this strange young woman who did not fit normal roles very well. They did give much of themselves, however, and inspired me to love literature and to love life. Not until I arrived at Claremont for a second masters degree did I again find mentors. Jane Douglass mentored by being who she was—a strong, committed, compassionate woman. John Cobb was my doctoral father and the most all-round mentor whom I ever had. He graced me with spectacular teaching, careful guiding of my dissertation, and working alongside me as a faculty colleague and as a leader of the Center for Process Studies. He could be pushing me unmercifully on my dissertation one minute and engaging collegially on faculty matters the next. He



*Family and friends enjoy the party.*

was amazingly versatile, and ALWAYS supportive; he believed in me (and still does) far more than I have believed in myself.

Alongside these individual people, I should also add that growing up within mostly loving, stable communities marked and scarred me. I was blessed with a strong sense of human goodness, deep within our beings. At the same time, I was protected from the worst consequences of racism and classism, which I encountered as shocking and appalling reali-

ties during my college years and beyond. I continue to make discoveries, even now, about the guilt I bear as a white, Southern woman, who benefitted in ways beyond my realization from an unjust social system. I make discoveries and live with consequences of that guilt everyday; many wounds have been opened anew as I move back into the South. This is not because the South is more racist than other places, but because the consciousness is strong here and my own family history is so entwined with this region. Just looking at me, people make assumptions. The particular assumptions may be true or untrue, but that hardly matters because I have to live with the white, female, racist heritage from which I spring and in which I have been able, mostly, to flourish.

Quite a different experience in growing up was the experience of sexism, which I discovered in the fiber of my being, even as a young child. Sexism was in my church, schools and extended family. I learned that I was second rate, and no matter how hard I tried, I would always be second rate, simply by virtue of my gender. Also, as an only child, I never learned to fight or compete; I had to learn these skills as an adult. I have become quite good at standing up for others or standing for an ethical position, but this ability is flawed. One of my friends pointed out some time ago that I have an uncanny ability to stand up for others, and an uncanny inability to stand up for myself. He was correct, and this continues. Further, whenever anyone sets out to compete with me, I always lose; I have never learned to play that role well.

**JW:** What do you consider the most pressing theological issue of our time?

**MEM:** This is a difficult question because theological issues are so intertwined. I would say, however, that the reality of God and God's relationship with the world is most pressing. I am not speaking of the existence of God, but the mysterious, complex, feeling-the-world, affecting-the-world reality of God. Most of the theological issues that are discussed most vigorously today have this issue underneath.

- Liberation theologians debate the *power of God*; many argue for an all-powerful God who has the ability to liberate and many emphasize the destructive potential of an all-powerful God who becomes a model for dominating human relationships and does not require and inspire human responsibility. The possibility that God's power can be understood beyond that either-or presumption is critical. The sense that God's power is real and accessible, but not total or controlling, awakens deeper sensations—awe, wonder and responsibility.

- Debates about the primacy and authority of scripture, like debates regarding true doctrine, beg questions of *God's revelation*. Do the Hebrew and Christian scriptures reveal God in fullness; are scriptures the only source of revelation? Does scripture answer all human questions about God, and can we know the answers definitively, or is God larger and more mysterious than scripture or interpreters of scripture can grasp and communicate? Questions of orthodoxy in regard to scripture and doctrine have emerged with fury in recent U.S. (and even global) theological discussions.

These, I believe, are a reaction of fear—fear of difference, fear of losing control, fear of not knowing all answers to all questions. In short, the emphasis on orthodoxy becomes a way of chasing away shadows of doubt and unknowing, reasserting control for oneself and one's people, and disregarding others' wisdom and value by claiming divine support for one's own. The larger reality of God and God's relationship with the world is begged by these discussions.

- Discussions of evil raise questions of the *goodness and power of God*. Does God cause or permit evil, or is God powerless to do anything about evil? This part of the question has never grabbed me as profoundly as it has other process theologians, but it is a critical question, and the work of process theologians is more helpful to me than any others. To me, as for most process theologians who have wrestled with this issue, the critical question is how God exercises goodness and power day to day. More pointedly, what do we miss of God when we allow our reflections on goodness and power to be abstracted into questions of God's existence or God's meta-activity? Here, process theology has been very helpful to me, both in pointing to the enormous and limited power of God, and in pointing to the persuasive presence



*Each group presented Mary Elizabeth with a cloth square, which was made into a beautiful farewell quilt*

of God's initial aim at the advent of every becoming occasion. At the same time, we who identify ourselves with process thought have been far less attentive to the ways of God in the lives of poor communities, who trust and turn to God in the midst of devastating events, finding strength and wisdom to effect liberation and hope. We have also been less attentive to the mysterious ways of God in the lives of mystics and the moments of truth faced by people in death camps or in the heat of international controversy. In these life-and-death moments, the reality of God and God's relationships are at issue.

- I am, thus, more captivated with the *presence and work of God*. The presence of God—mysterious and active—is an assurance that God is part of, and transcendent of, the realities of creature-existence. God's presence and work reveal complex realities of God's feeling for the world and suffering with the world. They also reveal the anguish within God, the divine Wisdom with a feminine face, the moving Spirit, the incarnate Son. Even reflections regarding Jesus as Christ raise evocative questions about the ways to God, and the realities of gender and control. Is Jesus the only way God becomes incarnate in this world? I join with Kwok Pui-lan's strong feeling tone in critiquing the arrogance and pre-

sumption of such an assertion. The very richness of incarnation is delimited and destroyed when the reality of incarnation is used to limit who comes to God, what gender is most valued, and what group has power over others. Incarnation has to do with revealing the mysterious, pervasive, complex presence and work of God; to use incarnation as a justification of ourselves is to destroy the very power of incarnation. Thus, when we face into questions of the presence and work of God, we face the challenges of daily walking and wrestling with God. The intellectual and doctrinal issues cease to dominate; we are shaped by existential questions regarding the realities and relationships of God.

- This naturally leads to questions of the *community within and beyond God*. The revival of Trinitarian discussions is most welcome in recent ecumenical discussions, especially the emphasis on communitarian understandings of the being of God. Again, the issues that are raised have to do with what limitations are placed on God by presuming a self-contained completeness of a Triune God. To what extent does the Trinitarian conceptuality open people, on the other hand, to see God-as-One-and-More-than-One, and to see the community within God as a renewing source of God's communion with creation? If ideas of Trinity are used to prove a position, especially if they are used to prove the superiority of Christianity or the self-sufficiency or distance of God, the richness of Trinitarian formulations become a tool of human control. If, on the other hand, the reality and relationships of Trinity are faced with a sense of mystery and reverence, they can awaken new awareness of realities and relationships within God's life.

I realize that using the terms "reality and relationships of God" evokes a certain nervousness, even in me; it suggests that reality is tangible and knowable, not constructed by human intellect. In fact, I intend to evoke that nervousness because I want to name the presence of a transcendent, immanent, living reality that is mysterious and unknowable, but real. At the same time, I want to emphasize that all we know or say of that reality is constructed by human reflection, and flawed by the limitations of human experience and distorted motivations. Deconstruction is an urgent order of the day; likewise attending to realities and relationships of God is urgent. Wrestling with such questions points to mystery; it compels thinking and defies understanding. Wrestling awakens us to dangers in our own constructions and opens us to a deep reality that is complex and demanding. Within Jewish and Christian traditions, we call that reality God. Thus, we find ourselves wrestling with God who will not let us go, but will wrestle until dawn and finally give us a new name.

**JW:** What do you think the state of theological education is today?

**MEM:** I feel privileged to be teaching in theological education during this era. It is a time when the boundaries of knowledge and human relationships are being pushed, and the diversity of students and faculty is burgeoning. It is also a time of experimentation; across the world, people are redesigning educational structures, curriculum and teaching in radical ways. Schools are engaged with more local theologies while seeking to globalize. They are expanding epistemological boundaries—the range of texts considered valuable for study, the methods by which texts are engaged, and the multiple ways that knowledge is taught and learned. They are encouraging lively intellectual discourse while seeking to build more human communities. They are attending more self-consciously to the formation and transformation of spiritual life. They are experimenting and rethinking action learning, with many schools expanding and deepening their contextual education, travel seminars, and service learning opportunities. Theological educators are giving more critical and reflective attention to ways their schools interact with the earth, with the church and other religious communities, and with the larger human community. In some refreshing instances, theological schools are engaged in lively dialogue and action on public issues, often encouraging students to study issues and stand for their commitments.

All of this is very positive, but many of the comments have an underside. Diversity, for example, is still slow in coming, and resistance flares. Diversification is often done in minimalist and superficial ways, often with a backlash, and often with selections of people who seem safe (but rarely are). Many schools made major commitments to diversification between the late 1970s and early '90s. Many have since discovered that actions toward inclusiveness now lead them to deal deeply and honestly with diverse voices, which is often more painful than playful. Many have discovered that their more superficial ways of addressing diversity concerns (e.g., with adjunct or non-tenure-track appointments) are sorely lacking and unethical. Moves across theological education and denominational bodies to encourage "traditional students" (read young white men) to attend seminary exemplify the generalized, and often hidden, fear of inclusiveness in theological education.

Perhaps the greatest danger in theological education today is domestication and "playing safe." With many church bodies (mainline Protestant, Roman Catholic, and others) facing decline, discouragement, or fear-evoking change, the churches and their schools (whether church-owned or independent) are persuaded to caution. Decisions are often guided by public relations value, and even the most forward-thinking actions are sometimes more superficial than real. This means that much of what I said above is muted: diversification, experimentation, localizing and globalizing, expanding

epistemologies, intellectual discourse, spiritual life, action learning, and critical reflection on institutional life in relation to the larger world.

What is needed? I would say COURAGE! I express some of my hopes in the following poem (which is itself still in process).

Courage—the call of the future!  
 Courage to be boldly intellectual—  
     unyielding to anti-intellectual  
 pushes and pulls,  
 converting into markets our theological schools;  
 Courage to address controversy  
     with more-than-words  
 and more-than-action  
 and more than superficial, hasty reaction;  
 Courage to be reflective  
 of God and the world,  
     chaos and swirl,  
         religious communion and religious life,  
         delight and agony of human strife;  
 Courage to be reborn  
     in very new forms—  
         seeded by experiments  
         and pushed beyond sentiments,  
             nourished by visions  
             to radical renditions  
                 of life in community,  
                 diversity-based unity,  
                 truth-seeking fever,  
                 but finding truth never,  
                 continuing to search  
                 with hopes to unearth  
             reconstructed visions,  
             untamed renditions,  
         bolder experiments,  
         deepening sentiments—  
 to transform the landscape  
 and theological shapes  
 of human reflection  
 and responsible action;  
 Courage to be honest and real—  
     diving to the center,  
         swimming in the depths,  
             and living on the margins  
             where discoveries are made  
         and wonder can flourish  
 And courage is nourished  
 again and again!

**JW:** How do you see multiculturalism related to process thought?

**MEM:** Multiculturalism is a rich resource for philosophers and theologians who ground their theories of reality in the

process of concrescence—“the many becoming one and increased by one.” Multiculturalism is also a daring challenge to a system of thought—like process thought—that tempts people to develop a “theory of everything.” Process thinkers are challenged to delight in the heuristic value of process theories and, likewise, to delight in the disruptions of those theories by the particularities of difference.

**JW:** One of the concerns of the day is this tremendous move toward globalization. Could your focus on multiculturalism be seen as an answer to, or maybe a countervailing force against, the homogenization of globalism?

**MEM:** Yes, no word is adequate to describe the realities of multiculturalism and globalization. Both can be, and have been, distorted into tools of oppression and homogenization. Unfortunately, every alternative language is likewise subject to distortion. The world is multicultural in reality, but the ways we engage with people who are “other” and the ways we conceptualize difference are critical. The dual temptations to homogenize people (ignoring difference) and to isolate people into pockets of difference (ignoring shared life) represents a dichotomy that we need to move beyond. This is why the work of process thinkers, alongside other thinkers, is crucial. This is why the self-critical assessment of process worldviews and perspectives is also crucial.

**JW:** What is a “traditioning” model of religious education?

**MEM:** I wanted to name my first book (*Education for Continuity and Change*) *Traditioning toward Future*. That expresses the heart of what I mean by a traditioning model—participating in a living tradition that re-members the past, lives fully and self-critically in the present, and contributes to a more hope-filled future. The dangers of bifurcation in education are all too real. Most educational institutions are tempted to attend only to the past or to the present. Most are tempted to be highly selective in what of the past and present are valued. To make these choices is natural to human beings, but we need not be complacent or self-congratulatory about our choices. I become very discouraged about educational institutions that engage in a rhetoric of “past-bashing” or “past-glorification,” for example.

The challenge of a traditioning approach to education is that education is designed with hope and vision for the future, drawing on the fullest possible range of resources from the past and present, and engaging these with critical imagination and reflective judgments and actions.

**JW:** What is a qualitative “ethogenic” method for

### studying congregations?

**MEM:** I have attempted to study the dynamics of human communities. The ethogenic method is closely akin to ethnography, but the emphasis is more on the movements and powers within human communities (etho-genesis) than on the existing forms of community life (ethno-graphs). The method is influenced by the work of Rom Harre and others, and it is based largely on collecting narratives (visually and orally), analyzing the movements in these narratives, negotiating different accounts, and developing an overarching narrative that describes a community with as much fullness as possible.

As a practical theologian, I also seek to develop theoretical constructs and proposals for future action from those narratives. This method is important to me because it is a significant way to draw from the wisdom of ordinary people in ordinary communities. The method is enough on the margins, however, that my youth book (12 years in the making) is still unpublished. I honestly do not believe that the book is poorly done (though in need of further revision to be sure). I believe that the very idea of seeking wisdom from ordinary communities, especially diverse religious and ethnic communities, is counter-cultural. The problem of being counter-cultural in this way is intensified for practical theologians; we are expected to offer clear homogeneous theories that are of clear value to everyone at one time.

**JW:** Why did you decide to leave Claremont and teach at Emory? What went into making that decision and how will Emory affect your work?

**MEM:** I sensed that my work was done at Claremont, which was a tragic realization. I also sensed that others could carry on the visions in Claremont better than I; that was an even more tragic realization for me. I felt like Moses denied the opportunity to travel the last few miles into the promised land. In fact, Moses was the image that came to me as I engaged in the discernment process.

Why did I go to Emory? I do not know. I can give many answers, but I know that the unfolding is yet to come. I was aware during the discerning days that Sue Nelson's words to me were true: I would be a new person in this new place. That is terrifying and exciting; it is also good process thinking! Some of the reasons are clear to me now: to do focused work on women in theology and ministry during the last season of my teaching career; to focus attention on the interaction of gender and culture in a Southern community where those issues are very pressing; to work with colleagues who are passionate for justice and reconciliation, both as a research topic and a direction for action; to work in a commu-

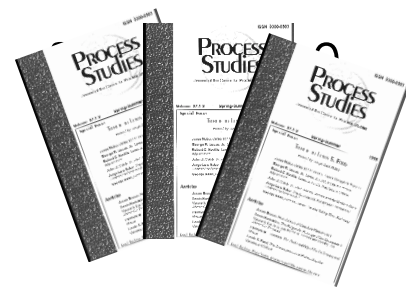
nity where religious communities and religious experience are understood as important sources for research and scholarship; to take hold of an opportunity to create exciting theological education outside the walls and curriculum structures of the theological school; and to initiate significant teaching and research projects with people across North America and the world—projects that are collaborative and bold. That is a long list, but the real answer is still elusive. What I do know is fairly simple; I have come to Emory because I sense a strong call on my life.

**JW:** Do you have plans to publish your poetry?

**MEM:** My poetry is not good poetry. I write it more to express myself than for any other reason. I do not know about publication. That is a mystery, even to me.



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# Constructive Postmodernism Studies in China

by Zhihe Wang

Chinese scholarship has been influenced by the deconstructive postmodernism inspired by Derrida, Foucault, and Lyotard. The situation began to change when constructive postmodernism, initiated by John B. Cobb, Jr. and David Ray Griffin, was introduced to China. The translation and publication of the Chinese version of *The Reenchantment of Science* (ed. David Griffin, SUNY, 1995) was the turning point. At this time, Chinese scholarship learned that there is another type of postmodernism, constructive postmodernism.

## I.

Some major repercussions of the translation and publication of the Chinese version of *The Reenchantment of Science* were reported by Wenyu Xie (cf. "Translating Process Thought Into Chinese" *Process Perspectives*, Spring, 1997). Here, I wish to contribute some new details.

One year after the book was published, I, as the editor of the Chinese version of *The Reenchantment of Science*, was invited by the annual conference of the Association of the Philosophy of Nature (nationwide in China) as a keynote speaker. To my surprise, almost all the participants had read the book and spoke highly of it. After the conference, I was invited to lecture at several major universities. In these lectures, I introduced constructive postmodernism, which seemed to impress the audiences. At some universities, professors began assigning the book to their graduate students on their "must-read" or reference list. For instance, Professor Qiquan Gui from Wuhan University even bought some copies of the book for his graduate students and held a seminar to discuss the book. Professor Guoqing Ji (Heilongjiang University) and Professor Xiaoting Liu (Harbin Normal College) expressed appreciation for the book's methodology, and emphatically recommend this book to their graduate and undergraduate students.

In November 1996, *Studies in Dialectics of Nature* invited ten scholars to discuss the book. Comments provided by four of the respondents were published in the journal (No. 1, 1997). The main points of these four commentaries were as follows: Entitling his article "Hope for New Science," Prof. Guangbi Dong (Chinese Academy of Science) comments that the spirit of *The Reenchantment of Science* is very positive in its efforts to transcend scientism and anti-scientism and that it opens a new angle for perceiving the physical world. The article also praises the effort to construct a new science

by combining modernity and premodernity. Another respondent, Zhuya Mao, described the value of constructive postmodernism as a new perspective. A third article, by Liu Bin (China Science & Technology University), points out that this is the first book which studies science from the point of view of postmodernism. This author sees it as a positive sign that the book is widely read and cited in Chinese scholarship. The fourth article, "Critique of Technology and Postmodern Scientific View," was written by Prof. Lianghua Gao (Qinghua University). He perceives both constructive postmodernism and traditional critical theory of technology as inspired by Heidegger, Horkheimer, and Marcuse, and he sees them as consistent. He appreciated the constructive postmodernists' works in building postmodern relationships between human individuals, between individuals and society, and between individuals and nature, by absorbing the achievements of a critical theory of technology.

At the same time, *Social Sciences Abroad* (No. 3, 1996) published a book review by Prof. Hongqi Zhang, "Transcending and Returning." The review calls the translation project of the SUNY Series in Constructive Postmodernism Thought a significant work, for it offers Chinese readers an introduction to constructive postmodernism. In Zhang's view, postmodern science is both transcendent and returning: to transcend modern physics is to return to the reenchanting world and the reenchanting science. Zhang concludes that, theoretically, the open and holistic thinking displayed by *The Reenchantment of Science* is very inspiring.

I have also completed a *Dictionary of Postmodernism*. Included in the dictionary are many entries concerned with constructive postmodernism, such as "constructive postmodernism," "postmodern science," "postmodern teleology," "Whitehead," "process theology," "founders of constructive postmodern philosophy," "Center for Process Studies," and "Center for Postmodern World." The book contains one million words and will be published by China Central Compilation & Translation Press.

## II.

With the passage of time, studies in constructive postmodernism in China are continuing to develop. Some analytical discussions of constructive postmodernism have appeared in Chinese journals. I will provide a brief introduction of these developments.

I have published several articles: “On Three Forms of Postmodernism” (*Social Sciences Abroad* No. 1, 1995), “Another Postmodernism” (the introduction of the Chinese edition of *The Reenchantment of Science*, 1995), “Postmodernistic Constructive Dimension” (*China Social Sciences* No. 1, 1997), “Postmodernism and Constructivity” (the introduction of a Chinese edition of *Spirituality and Society: Postmodern Vision*, 1998). In these articles, I systematically introduce constructive postmodernism to Chinese scholarship. In addition, I inquired into the relationship between constructive postmodernism and deconstructive postmodernism. I emphasize the valuable contribution of constructive postmodernism, describing its most significant asset as the development of a new way of thinking that helps to expand our horizon and inspire our creativity.

I also describe common points between constructive and deconstructive postmodernism. First, both of them are discontent with modernity and try to overcome it. Second, both of them remind us of our responsibility for continued concern for the existence of humans and nature. Foucault once said that he liked “curiosity”<sup>1</sup> because curiosity arouses our concern for things existing and possible and it causes us to sharpen our perceptions of reality. Constructive postmodernism develops this kind of curiosity through promoting our concern for others, for nature, for past, and for future. But why must we be concerned about others? Foucault did not provide an answer, but constructive postmodernism gives an answer—the world is organic. The relationship between individuals and others is internal. Therefore, people will feel a sense of kinship with other species, which are viewed “as having their own experiences, values, and purposes.”<sup>2</sup> Third, both constructive and deconstructive postmodernism promote creativity. According to constructive postmodernism, “creativity” is “an essential aspect of our natures” (David Griffin).<sup>3</sup> Rorty tries to develop a new concept of the self as one who generates and invents.<sup>4</sup> Lyotard also encouraged people to seek chances, especially the chance of creation. Fourth, both regard the “principle of liberty” as “the highest principle.”<sup>5</sup> My conclusion is that in the face of the strong modernist worldview, it is advisable for constructive postmodernism to ally with deconstructive postmodernism.

Some scholars have studied the relationship between constructive postmodernism and traditional Chinese culture. Prof. Meijun Fan from Beijing Normal University inquired into the relationship between constructive postmodernism and Zhuang Zi, a great Chinese ancient thinker. Her study in “The Postmodern Implication in Aesthetics in Zhuang Zi” indicated that, first, there is something common between the postmodern sense of oneness with nature implied by constructive postmodernism and the thought of unification of humankind and nature in Zhuang Zi. According to Griffin, “postmodern

persons do not feel like aliens in a hostile or indifferent nature. Rather, they feel at home in the world.”<sup>6</sup> In Zhuang Zi, we read this: “To become together with nature and feel oneness with nature is a lofty aesthetic realm.” Secondly, both constructive postmodernism and Zhuang Zi undermine the complacency and parochialism of human beings. Zhuang Zi says, “I am in the world, just like a little stone and a little tree in a mountain.”

In her book, *Contemporary Interpretation of Traditional Chinese Aesthetics* (China Social Sciences Press, Beijing, 1997), Prof. Fan compares Whiteheadian organism and the Chinese traditional holistic consciousness reflected in the notion of “harmony is beauty.” Further, she offers an extensive discussion of the similarities and differences between ecological consciousness in traditional Chinese aesthetics and the ecological consciousness of the contemporary West. Her conclusion is that the organic holistic consciousness that both Whitehead and ancient Chinese thinkers convey is significant to our lives in that it helps us overcome the fragmentation of modern thinking, to overcome the division between humanity and nature, individual and individual, male and female, soul and body, as well as other divisions of this kind in our life.

Dr. Linghong Kong (Zhongshan University, Guangzhou) has also explored the relationship between constructive postmodernism and the work of Zhuang Zi in an article, “Constructive Postmodernism and the Thoughts of Zhuang Zi” (*Journal of Seeking Truth* No. 3, 1998). He points out several points in Zhuang Zi that are similar to constructive postmodernism, such as the criticisms of conquering nature, of analytic thinking, and of dualism. For example, Zhuang Zi considers humankind to be in harmony with nature. He shares the same concern for nature as postmodern thinkers, expressing this in the concept of “a complex garden to be tended, respected, harvested, and loved.”<sup>7</sup> There are many other scholarly studies of the relationship between constructive postmodernism and Chinese traditional wisdom, such as Liu Kui’s (Nanjing University of Science and Technology) “Paradigm Alternative and Postmodern Organism” and Zhong Cai’s (Nanjing University) “Postmodern Sciences and Chinese Traditional Scientific Thought.” (These two articles are not yet published.)

Other scholars are beginning to consider the relationship between constructive postmodernism and contemporary Chinese culture, Chinese postmodernization, and the relationship between constructive postmodernism and theology. Prof. Zhuoxing Su (Shenzhen University) regards constructive postmodernism as an important resource for Chinese postmodernization. (Prof. Su’s article, *Postmodernization: A Challenge for Chinese Culture*, is offered in the member papers section, p. 22.) Prof. Yuheng Wang, in his article, “Some Discussions on Postmodern Philosophy” (*Academic*

*Trends*, No. 6, 1998), shows great appreciation for Griffin's preface of the Chinese version of *The Reenchantment of Science*, specifically Griffin's attitude concerning the postmodernization of China. Prof. Baowei Zhu (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) has devoted himself to the study of Whitehead's process thinking. His article, "Organism Event Value: Whitehead's Organism" (*Field-Being* No. 2, 1996) has exercised some influence in Chinese scholarship. Prof. Xinping Zhuo (The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) published an article with a title "Postmodern Movement and the Response of Theology" (*Journal of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Graduate College* No. 3, 1997), in which he brings to light the relationship between constructive postmodernism and contemporary theology. He envisions the fundamental transition in postmodernism from destructiveness to constructiveness, from negativeness to positiveness, from pessimism to optimism, and recognizes the contribution by constructive postmodernism in this transition. Finally, Prof. Yuehou Qu and Jie Yu co-authored an essay, "Development of Process Theology in the 20th Century" (*Social Sciences Abroad*, No. 4, 1998). The article traces the development from process theology to constructive postmodernism.

The story seems endless. There are an increasing number of scholars interested in and involved with constructive postmodernism. As we fulfill our translation project, we can expect a greater and wider impact on Chinese thinking. So far we have translated and published two other books—*Spirituality and Society* (David Griffin, ed.) and *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* (John Cobb and David Griffin). *Founders of Constructive Postmodern Philosophy* (David Griffin, ed.) and *God Religion and the Postmodern World* (David Griffin) have also been translated and are ready for publication.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984*. Translated by Alan Sheridan and others; edited with an introduction by Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Routledge, 1988).

<sup>2</sup> *Spirituality and Society: Postmodern Visions*, ed. David Ray Griffin (Albany: State University of New York, 1988), p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> David Griffin, "Peace and the Postmodern Paradigm," in *Spirituality and Society* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

<sup>5</sup> G.B. Madison, *The Logic of Liberty* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986).

<sup>6</sup> *Spirituality and Society: Postmodern Visions*, ed. David Ray Griffin (Albany: State University of New York, 1988), p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Frederick Ferre, "Religious World Modeling and Postmodern Science," in *The Reenchantment of Science*, ed. David Ray Griffin (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).



## Conference Summaries

### Highlands Institute Summer Seminar

by Marjorie Suchocki

Highlands Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought held its summer Members Seminar in Highlands, North Carolina, from June 23-26. The theme of the seminar was "Constructive Alternatives for the 21st Century: Reflections on the Chicago School." Nancy Howell and Mason Olds coordinated the seminar, and presided over sessions. Papers were presented on Shailer Mathews (William D. Lindsey), G.B. Foster and A.E. Haydon (Jerome A. Stone), Bernard Meland (Tyron Inbody), and Henry Nelson Wieman (Marvin C. Shaw). Issues raised were the significance of these thinkers in their own day, and their continuing influence and possibilities for contemporary thought, particularly with regard to naturalistic theism. Papers were read prior to the seminar, and prepared responses were read by Jennifer Jesse, Jon Taylor, Susann Pangerl, Creighton Peden, Howard Radest, Emanuel Goldsmith, Karl Peters, Everett J. Tarbox, and Don Wester.

As always, the intensive academic discussions were balanced with festive evenings of fine food and *bonhomie*, and afternoons of leisure for hiking amidst the rain drops or otherwise enjoying the ambience of the Carolinian resort town.

Next year's seminar is set for June 23-27, and will focus on the thought of Richard Bernstein.

### Whitehead Society of Korea Conference

by Jinsun Park

The Whitehead Society of Korea (Young-Hwan Oh: President) held the 3rd annual conference on "Whitehead and Civilization" on March 27, 1999 at Chungnam University in Daejeon, Korea. About 50 people attended. Major papers were: "How to understand Human Mentality: A Whiteheadian Looks at the Contemporary Mind-Body Debate," by Insok Ko; "Civil Participation in the Technical Assessment and the Whiteheadian 'Togetherness' in Decision Making," by Jongduck Choi & Sangha Lee; "The Concept of Civilization in East and West: From a Whiteheadian Perspective," by Wangshik Jang. Other presenters included Byungki Chun, Younghyun Cho, and Sungjin Song. The next annual conference is to be held in February, 2000, at Methodist Theological Seminary in Seoul.

# William Hamrick

by K. Leann Long

## *The Phenomenology of Kindness*

On March 18, 1999, Bill Hamrick, Professor of Philosophy at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, presented his paper "Judgment, Empathy, and Kindness" at a seminar entitled "The Phenomenology of Kindness." Hamrick argues that there are some forms of judgment that are compatible with, and even necessary for, empathy and kindness. He states that, "a moment's reflection is all that is necessary to realize that it is a serious confusion to hold that judgment is necessarily inconsistent with empathy and/or kindness. Empathy in fact requires certain types of judgments; it is not pure feeling." This is because, first, "there is no pure feeling devoid of all cognitive aspects." Additionally, Hamrick argues that empathy requires "some types of judgments to be distinguished from emotional infection through which I am caught up in another's joy or sorrow such that I also am moved to laughter or tears." He goes on to explain that empathy demands that distinctions be maintained between the "I" and the Other. This is because imaginatively taking the other person's point of view demands bracketing one's own frame of reference, opening oneself to a foreign point of view, which in turn presupposes interpretive judgments about that other person's Lifeworld and how that particular individual perceives it.

For example, "different types of judgments are necessary to supplement empathic understanding by assessing the *appropriateness* of another's joy, sorrow, anger, anxieties, and so on."

Hamrick believes that there are six types of judgment that "block us from imaginatively taking the position of another person," and are, thereby, inconsistent with empathy and kindness. These are

- 1) judgments made in the face of overwhelming need and suffering;
- 2) judgments that convey insincerity and unavailability through metallic charity, or 'cold comfort';
- 3) judgments that reflect decisions to follow rules with no accompanying sensitivity to the demands of the context of the action;
- 4) *negative* judgments of the judicious spectator that, in the pursuit of truth and justice, are apparently inconsistent with kindness, and even with empathy;
- 5) judgments that reduce their objects to mere fungibility;

6) and judgments that, in a variety of ways, express, or at least suggest, inappropriate claims of superiority.

Hamrick also describes situations in which judgments are not only consistent with empathy and kindness, but "essential for their proper functioning." For example, refusing to spoil children requires "judgments about what is, or seems to be, in the person's best interest, and hence distinctions between short-term benefits and long-term harms, while empathetically taking her point of view." Hamrick further explains that sometimes the "failure to make such necessary judgments is attributable to the desire for self-gratification as much as it is to ignorance of the consequences."

According to Hamrick, judgments may also help people "work through problems of self-esteem and, in a Kantian sense, self-respect. These judgments include both those made about such people in our roles of judicious spectators, as well as judgments we think it reasonable for those individuals to make about themselves and their Lifeworlds." He goes on to explain that, "conversely, some people need the benefit of our judgments in order to help them accept responsibility for their actions." And, finally, he states that "judgments are also necessary for kindness to underwrite a practical wisdom as an alternative to a Kantian morality of rules and to George Eliot's 'men of maxims' generally." This wisdom is "intelligent and purposive...empathetically imaginative, judiciously speculative, and requires calculative thought to accomplish its aims. It does not reduce to casuistry, but rather provides space for rules which it both incarnates and supplements with an *inventive charity* which is context-sensitive." Hamrick believes that "context-sensitivity makes kindness an accomplishment rather than a given, because it requires not only the right sort of disposition, but also factual understanding of the external circumstances that we wish to arrange to our purposes."

In addition to Hamrick's philosophical exposition, his paper was rich with illustrations borrowed from a range of literary authors, including Dickens, Eliot, Emerson, and Forster. His presentation was followed by a lively discussion.



# John England

by Zhihe Wang

## *Walking Paths of Wisdom: Moving Beyond Western Theology*

On April 8, 1999, Dr. John England presented a paper entitled “Walking Paths of Wisdom: Moving beyond Western Theology.” England is interested in Asian Christian theology and he urges Christian theologians to move beyond Western theology through attention to different models and images in Asian theology. Such models, including liberation, *minjung*, and feminist theologies, have a wide range of methods to convey their contents, including story-telling, social analysis, life experience, mutual dialogue, intuitive insight, and community action. Some of the aspects and methodologies have been noticed by Western theologians but, says England, “there is in fact a truly vast body of reflection, interpretation and engagement through the region.”

According to England, Asian theologians have recovered new creative models of theology that reflect localization and contextualization—for example, women’s insight, post-colonialism, liberation and integration, communitarianism, holism, and cross-textualism. Accordingly, Asian theology has moved beyond various dualisms, professionalism, patriarchies, elite privileges, middle classness, rationalism, communalism, and confessionalism. And yet, Western theology has not accommodated these developments.

In his presentation, England outlined some of the new models Asian theologians have contributed, including:

1) Models of theological reflection:

*anubhava* (Sanskrit), direct experience/insight;

*dhyana* (Sanskrit), evoking/imaging truth;

*Ching* (Chinese), intuitive reverence.

2) Models of exegesis:

*ngelmu* (Malaysian/Indonesian), seeking knowledge of harmony;

*dvani* (Sanskrit), evolving/imaging truth;

*marifah* (Arabic), heart knowledge-quest and evocation

of heart.

3) Models of “interpretation”(hermeneutic):

*yang chi* (Chinese), fostering the spirit of life;

*bhakti* (Sanskrit), the way of love and devotion.

4) Models of “goals”:

*Darsana* (Sanskrit), fullest seeing, meeting;

*Jnana* (Sanskrit), highest intuitive understanding;

*dao* (Chinese), way of communion with all things;

*sen* (Chinese), effortless (divine) creativity.

England stresses that these new theological models are

not entirely alien to Christian tradition. Many Asian theologians have shown their similarities with Christian models. For example, dynamic unity between intuition and inherited knowledge, imagination and social criticism, mystic vision and life experience, symbolic action and political manifesto. There is also the unique harmony between life, word and people, between “subversive wisdom and convivial friendship, breathing socio-political criticism and astonishing compassion.” Jesus’ life-with-others—the unity between faith and action, lyrical worship and the life of crafts-persons, teachers, physicians and administrators in the more Semitic tradition of Antiochene Christianity—is another example of closeness between Christian and Asian theologies.

England also spells out the contributions Asian theologians have made to “the unities we have lost progressively since at least the 12th century C.E.—and are now to reclaim.” Among these unities are that of body and mind, spirit and matter, the one and the many, the human and the spiritual, feeling and thinking, the beauty in the external world and in the inner being, the divine and the human. The invisible things of God are found in what is made/crafted and lived, the Dao and the Dharma, which are embodied in experience, in struggles for justice, and in anyone’s authentic voice. “Jesus is therefore ‘shoes-off and barefoot,’ ‘guru,’ to our ‘sisya,’ the ‘poor monk,’ ‘bodhisattva,’ the ‘crucified people,’ ‘*minjung* of the *minjung*,’ the Confucian Sage.” According to England, a being in the becoming, a wisdom within the action, a Dao, is much more a path of life than just theory and praxis or words and deeds.

England ended his presentation with the statement that the goal of studying Asian theology is not for “final or comprehensive statements, but rather for road-signs to the-life-of-Jesus-with others,” not constructing “systematic theologies” but rather “reflection-at-work and the food for the road that comes in our quest.” In doing so, our role as theologians is to work along paths of wisdom.

Walking is itself an arriving, a finding. We begin to see more and more of the One God of all peoples and places. To realize this goal, it is necessary for us to move beyond a lot of traditional theological concerns and to empty ourselves of self in order to listen and open ourselves to the other’s diverse experience and wisdom.



# Bruce Epperly

by Scott Jansen



## *The Healings of Jesus for the 21st Century*

An enthusiastic welcome was offered to the Reverend Bruce Epperly, Ph.D., on June 15, 1999. Epperly offered fresh ways of understanding “healing” that integrate the latest insights from various perspectives: historical, spiritual, scientific, metaphysical and pragmatic. “Scientific and religious dogmatism is crumbling,” said Epperly, thus leaving a need for new models that do not simply deny all healings outright, nor envision them in a religiously simplistic manner.

Epperly identified four cultural and religious factors that are playing important roles in crumbling dogmas. 1) The new physics envisions a web of interrelationships wherein “no event can be attributed to just one cause.” Physicists are also finding more examples of action-at-a-distance, a necessary premise for much of what Epperly describes. 2) Many new empirical studies have correlated prayer or religion with improved health. In the face of this evidence, it becomes harder for the scientific community to dogmatically deny the notion that prayer changes things. 3) The movement toward a global culture and religious pluralism has produced creative syntheses of various elements from both East and West. Epperly wants to move Christians beyond any parochialism to proclaim that “wherever truth and healing are present, Christ is present.” 4) Specific pioneering healers in Christian churches, such as Agnes Sanford and Morton Kelsey, have modeled a new paradigm in their own behavior. Such persons show that healing can be advocated in a responsible way.

Epperly’s new vision requires new images of God, who is “neither punitive, authoritarian, nor specifically masculine in nature.” Also, God is omnipresent but not omnipotent, so God can be present in every healing technique, without being a unilateral or one-dimensional cause. Finally, as a guard against any tendency toward blaming the victims, Epperly stresses that “for Jesus, God is not the source of disease.” He goes as far as to say that disease never arises from God.

According to Epperly, not only the qualities of God, but also the metaphysical models for God’s worldly interaction, must change. Quoting Whitehead’s “the secular movements of God,” Epperly asserts that God’s aim at healing is present in the normal functioning of the body, and that within each

cell is a healing light. God’s healing is present in every event whereby wholeness of mind and body is advanced, “even when the name of Jesus is not invoked.”

Another major shift Epperly suggests is in the functioning of mainline and liberal Christian churches. He finds deeper levels of spirituality being practiced outside the institutional church, because many churches have abandoned holistic healing in favor of ministering exclusively to the disembodied soul. He suggests that churches focus on Jesus’ teachings about the abundant life, and rediscover the promotion of wholeness in this world as well as the next. Epperly believes the current aversion to healing ministry in both hospitals and churches is harmful and unwarranted. If we take Jesus as a model for our behavior, we should follow him in using a variety of healing methods as the various circumstances allow.

Epperly argues that the historicity of healing stories in the New Testament is too lightly dismissed. In a direct reversal of Hume’s argument that we cannot believe in past miracles because we do not experience them today, Epperly writes that “these stories are as real today as they were two thousand years ago.” In other words, the healing events that Epperly has participated in personally have led him to find much historicity in the healings stories of Jesus. While he admits that the stories recorded in the Bible were selected from the more mundane historical healings because of their dramatic or proselytizing potential, he insists that events that are similar to even these extraordinary events are not foreign to our own era.

Dr. Dennis McDonald, New Testament professor at CST, encouraged Epperly to further delineate the “limits of healing.” Epperly agreed that healing does indeed have limits and that these limits need to be made clearer so that expectations are not raised in an unwarranted fashion. He asserted that there are unanswered and partially-answered prayers. In explanation, he reiterated his point that every event begins with multiple causes. Thus Christ’s influence is always present even when other causal influences are counteracting, and, even when a healing is deemed successful, no healing event occurs based on only one cause (God). Hence, limits are very real.



# Robert Neville

by Randy Ramal

## *Time, Eternity, and God*

In the dialogue *Euthyphro*, Plato makes Socrates ask Euthyphro the following: “Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?” I imagine that if a Whiteheadian process theologian had been present as the question was asked, then the answer would probably have been: the pious is loved by the gods because it is pious. If Robert Neville was present, he probably would have answered: because the gods love it. Or would he?

Neville considers himself a process philosopher whose work “owes a deep debt to process theology.” Yet he differs on some issues with the Whiteheadian-Hartshornean branch of process theism. One of the major issues on which he disagrees with “process theism” is the question of creation *ex nihilo*. Whereas most process theologians reject this doctrine as a false cosmological picture, Neville accepts this doctrine as the truest representation of how God relates to the world. For him, all determinate things, including any explanatory or metaphysical first principles, are dependent on a deity that brings them into being. God is that eternal and indeterminate being who creates all determinate things out of nothingness, including the world. Otherwise, Neville believes, God’s power as a being worthy of our worship would be compromised.

Neville, also considers himself a naturalist who rejects the idea of a supernatural transcendence beyond nature. His idea of creation *ex nihilo*, therefore, should not be interpreted as supernaturalism. Still, process theologians follow Whitehead in saying that God is not the exception to metaphysical principles, but is their chief exemplification. For them, the existence of both God and the world is unintelligible without these first principles. From this perspective, Neville’s idea of an indeterminate being who creates something determinate is unintelligible. Neville himself does not think this is a real concern for his theology because, he says, the idea of creation *ex nihilo* is different in kind from that of explanatory first principles. He believes that the only explanation required for creation is its grounding in God’s creative act.

The main question, then, is whether the first metaphysical principles are metaphysical because God created them as such or that God is subject to these principles because they are metaphysical. Neville believes that it is the former because, for him, the question as to why there is something, or indeed something determinate, rather than nothing requires

a creative act that goes beyond the idea of first metaphysical principles. Therefore, Whitehead’s notion of creativity must be the result of a creative decision.

Neville believes that this issue has ramifications for the question of God’s eternity and, indeed, for the question of the eternity of the human soul. He says that in rejecting the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, process theologians, including Whitehead and Hartshorne, have focused too much on the question of time to the detriment of eternity. Indeed, while commending Whitehead’s philosophy as “perhaps the twentieth century’s most elaborate attempt to rethink the problematic of time,” he stresses that Whitehead’s emphasis on the present has limited him to discussions of temporality without eternity. Neville aims at supplementing the process account of temporality with his idea of divine eternity.

Making a distinction between immortality and eternity, the former understood as life after death, he sees eternity as the togetherness of the three modes of time: past, present, and future. This togetherness is not itself *in* time but the condition for time’s flow. Neville refuses to take one mode of time as a paradigm for the other two modes and he insists that, without the notion of eternity, time would be conceived statically.

Neville adds that his theology of eternity does not depend on cosmology. For him, whatever scientists find the cosmos to be would not contradict the fact that God is the Creator of this cosmos. He sees in contemporary scientific attempts to understand reality a hopeful rejoining of religion to articulate ultimate things. Still, he wants religion to stand for itself so that contemporary physics would not impose its own conceptions of reality upon it. Finally, Neville sees the soul itself as eternal because it has relations to the togetherness of all temporal modalities. As such, and as a moral and religious category, it has a relation to God. Neville believes that personal identity is itself an indication of the soul’s eternity. For example, the fact that we have moral responsibility shows that there are eternal elements relevant to us within time.

During his presentation, Neville said that he was aiming to provoke a discussion with his process colleagues. The presentation was lively and stimulating and, not surprisingly, it generated many questions and comments from the audience.



# Lynne Faber Lorenzen

by Daniel Ott

## *A Process Spirituality*

On Wednesday, June 16, 1999, Lynne Faber Lorenzen presented "A Process Spirituality." Professor Lorenzen invited the audience into a world of questions and issues arising out of her teaching experience at Augsburg College in Minneapolis. The undergraduate students with whom Dr. Lorenzen works ask questions regarding the relationship between 'spirituality' and 'institutionalized religion.' The students struggle with traditional religious concepts such as the power of God, the category of sin, the authority of Scripture and tradition, and the value of creeds and rituals. Lorenzen suggests that process thought may help resolve some of these difficulties and help to mediate between traditional religious conceptions and the practical spirituality of her students.

Among Lorenzen's students, experience stands out as the most powerful authority. She explains that, "when this group is requested to write about how they think about what they believe, they resort to 'I feel...' and tell of personal experiences that have shaped their feelings." Scripture, tradition, and even reason seem to play little to no role in the spirituality of these students. Due to the students' strong suspicion of institutional authority, Christian doctrines are rejected out of hand. Lorenzen worries that these doctrines are not rejected because of any healthy critical analysis of the doctrines themselves; rather, the doctrines are rejected because they represent an institutional religion with which the students have had negative experiences. Lorenzen is concerned that the result is that the students lack the resources and skills to integrate their religious experience with their experience and reflection in other areas of study and other aspects of life.

Lorenzen suggests that if the students could articulate the goal of their developing spirituality it might be summed up as "being an integrated, whole person....They are looking for a way to bring together everything that they know and that has happened to them and their friends and create a

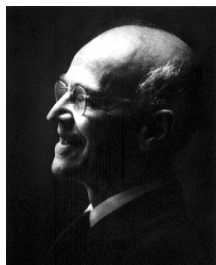
world view that can honestly account for all of it." Lorenzen notices another tension in that this goal is usually stated in very individualistic terms, and yet this group also has an aim toward developing relationship. Lorenzen hints that process categories might help to relieve this tension. She suggests that in a process framework a person is a person only in a community. This sort of formulation would help the student to preserve her individuality while understanding her interdependence with her environment.

Lorenzen's presentation continued as she quickly moved through other themes showing how process categories might function as mediator between the underdeveloped spirituality of her students and the Christian tradition. She used this methodology exploring the God/world relationship, theodicy, Christology, and Biblical authority. At the conclusion of the seminar, she suggested that she might also pursue other themes including the relationship between religion and science, hermeneutics, inclusive language, prayer, and politics.

At the close of the seminar, a fruitful discussion ensued. Various teachers and professors spoke about the challenges of teaching religion to young students in the contemporary context. Many affirmed the tensions and problems to which Lorenzen points. A range of suggestions emerged as possible methods and environments within which to teach religion to young students today. Some suggested a multicultural approach, others urged that students must first be introduced to the practice of integrating their ideas and experience, still others suggested that the teacher's task is to constantly bring students to new ideas thereby broadening students perspectives. All in attendance surely look forward to Lynn Faber Lorenzen's further contribution as she seeks to construct a process spirituality that would mediate between the typical spirituality of young people today and the history and traditions of institutional religion.



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# Expressions

art forms with process  
themes



## Of Being and Becoming

*Daniel Corrie*

### 1. Being

I dreamed of a land where each moment returned,  
touchable. There, destiny was a frozen circle  
of **selfhood**. Time's Medusa laughed into the eyes  
of the enchanted statues in her garden

whose stone gestures defined them. In her iris,  
her heroes circled, their swords forever arcing  
or arms fending off their panic of seeing.  
Their startled forms littered the timeless garden.

### 2. Becoming

Between living only forward and understanding  
only by looking backward, a life melts into years.  
The wheel of some Medusa's eye may hold  
a man's shape turning. How he looks into her eyes

defines him, his way of seeing creating his **gorgon**.  
Sometimes I feel as if I return to myself. I turn  
to feel the eye of the sun's glance lingering.  
Its heat curves the air. Now's moment shimmers.

Most of Daniel Corrie's poetry is concerned with aspects of time and is influenced by twentieth-century debates surrounding the subject of time. His poems have appeared in numerous magazines, including *The Nation*, *The Southern Review*, *Shenandoah*, among others. Aralia Press (West Chester University) published a fine-press edition of one of his long poems. He resides in Atlanta, Georgia, where he earns his living as a writer, editor and publisher in the field of family crisis intervention.



# Interconnections

*News from around the world*

## Center for Spirituality & Sustainability

Plans are underway for the establishment of a Center for Spirituality and Sustainability (CSS). It will be sponsored by Heifer Project International, the Center for Respect of Life and Environment (CRLE, Washington, DC), and the Associated Colleges of the South (ACS, Atlanta, Georgia). Its first programs will be in the summer of 2000.

CSS will be a non-profit organization emphasizing three themes and offering two kinds of programs. The themes are spirituality, sustainability, and holistic worldviews. The two kinds of programs are travel seminars and summer workshops. Process philosophy and theology will figure prominently in the "holistic worldviews" presented in the travel seminars and summer workshops.

### Travel Seminars

The travel seminars will be to various locations that are especially conducive to a consideration of the three themes. One of them will be to Assisi, Italy, where, for six years, the Center for Respect of Life and Environment and St. Thomas College in Miami, Florida, have been taking students and adults interested in continuing education. The week-long seminar features visits to historic sites in Assisi related to St. Francis and St. Clare, and discussions of Franciscan spirituality and sustainability. CRLE and St. Thomas are asking CSS to assume responsibility for the continuation of the seminar and make it available for a broader constituency. The first CSS-sponsored trip to Assisi will be July 7-14, 2000.

Other travel seminars will build upon tours already developed by Heifer Project International, which has programs in 131 countries and has been offering "study tours" for ten years to locations such as Honduras, Zimbabwe, South Africa, China, Poland, Romania, Thailand, Laos, Tanzania, and Peru. HPI also has programs in the United States and offers study tours in several US locations. Such a tour typically involves visiting a rural location, to learn about sustainable agriculture and community development, with side tours to culture sites. Trips usually last ten to fifteen days. CSS hopes to take one or two of these tours and, in cooperation with HPI, make it an ongoing travel tour of CSS.

Still another travel seminar within the United States will be to the University of the South (Sewanee, Tennessee), where the ACS is developing another "center of excellence" in addition to CSS. This tour will involve scientists, social scientists, and humanities faculty taking students to look at issues related to environmental history and community development.

## Summer Workshops

Summer workshops will be held at the HPI learning center in Perryville, Arkansas and at the Meadowcreek Project for Environmental Education in Fox, Arkansas. One will be a five-day course, offered also in Claremont, California, called "A Theology of Belonging." It will be an introduction to the three themes. The first such course will be offered in the summer of 2001. It will serve as a springboard course for other workshops and for travel seminars.

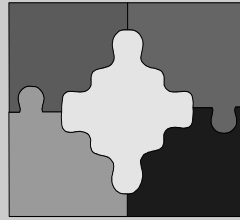
Other workshops will generally be two-day affairs and will be taught by ACS faculty (and faculty from affiliate institutions) on a variety of subjects related to the three themes. Subjects include environment and literature, religion and science, world religions and ecology, various kinds of ecologically sensitive spirituality, and the Earth Charter. (The Charter is a people's document, developed by constituencies throughout the world, aimed at enunciating hopes for a more just and sustainable world. It contains sixteen principles aimed at helping individuals, communities, businesses, and other organizations respect the well-being of life and environment, with attention to problems of consumption, population, violence.) CSS will be a regional center for Earth Charter Studies.

On holistic worldviews, CSS will emphasize process theologies and philosophies, along with the cosmological orientation of Thomas Berry. Additionally, it will emphasize holistic worldviews from the various world religions, as have recently been considered by a series of conferences at Harvard on world religions and ecology. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, who helped organize those conferences, have developed a Forum on Religion and Ecology (based at Bucknell University), which is also a partner to the Center. These two individuals are on the Board of the Center for Respect of Life and Environment, which is one of the three major sponsors.

Their hope is to ground this programs—the summer workshops and the travel seminars—in a degree program, such that workshops and seminars can be part of, for example, a Masters of Liberal Studies program offered by a college or a Masters of Theology program offered by a seminary. They are in conversation with various institutions concerning this possibility.

For more information, contact:

Jay McDaniel or Sheila Miller,  
Hendrix College  
Phone: (501) 450-1366  
Email: mcdaniel@hendrix.edu



## Association for Process Psychology

The Association for Process Psychology 1999 Inaugural Conference will be held on November 12-14, 1999, at the home of Barbara Keiller in San Diego, CA. The conference will include the presentation and discussion of papers on a variety of topics and planning sessions to set the stage for our future. The Association for Process Psychology grew out of the International Silver Anniversary Conference on Whitehead held in Claremont, California, in August of 1998, with a commitment to meet in San Diego in the fall of 1999, and the aim of renewing and extending our identity and purpose for the future. We will be attempting to publish a book of articles following the conference. Membership is open to anyone who is interested in the integration of psychology broadly construed with the Process Thought that emerged out of the work of Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne, and has continued through the efforts of John Cobb, Bernard Loomer, David Griffin, Marjorie Suchocki, and many others. Anyone interested may obtain more information through the Association for Process Psychology web site, <<http://www.processpsychology.org>> by e-mail at [app@adobe creations.com](mailto:app@adobe creations.com) or you may call or write:

David E. Roy, Ph.D.  
5475 N. Fresno St., Ste. 109  
Fresno, CA 93710  
559-435-7835

## Japan Internet Center for Process Studies

The *Japan Internet Center for Process Studies*, the official web site of the Japan Society for Process Studies is changing its address. The new address is <http://pweb.cc.sophia.ac.jp/~yutaka-t/process/index.htm>. This site offers information in both Japanese and English. It features "The Contextual Index of *Process and Reality*" as well as "A Selected Bibliography of Process Philosophy."

## Whitehead Summit Update

The Whitehead Summit, a gathering of representatives of programs, groups, and organizations around the world promoting process thought, will be held on January 4-6, 2001, in Claremont. We will be meeting to discuss ways of keeping in touch, working together, and perhaps envisioning new

forms of activity that will give increasing importance to this way of thinking in the coming century. We urge any reader of this Newsletter who is involved in a group or program promoting process thought or who is thinking of organizing one to contact us, especially if we have not contacted you!

## Streams of William James

Announcing the creation of the new newsletter of the William James Society, "Streams of William James." The first issue was released in early May. Visual art and articles have been contributed by James scholars and fans at various levels of discovery of James, themselves, and the world. Published James scholars include Jason Gary Horn and Jonathan Levin.

The William James Society is a non-profit organization in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts devoted to promoting the study of the work and enduring legacy of William James (1842-1910). Membership includes a subscription to the publication. A copy of that newsletter will be sent to new members to get a sense of what has been done so far. Basic membership rates are:

\$15 for one year or \$25 for two years for membership with mailing address in the USA.

\$20 for one year or \$30 for two years for membership with mailing address outside the USA.

To join, please make your check payable to:

Randall Albright

and send it to:

Randall Albright  
423 Marlborough Street  
Boston, MA 02115

In the memo area of the check, please write:

William James Society



Send announcements to:  
Leann Long, co-editor  
1325 North College Ave.  
Claremont, CA 91711  
[leann@ctr4process.org](mailto:leann@ctr4process.org)

## Thanks to Hartshorne Members

The co-directors and staff of the Center for Process Studies would like to recognize members who have honored Charles Hartshorne by purchasing a lifetime Hartshorne Membership. With gratitude, we give thanks to our Hartshorne members:

**Anonymous**  
**Charles Birch**  
**Adam Blatner**  
**Vinson Bronson**  
**John Buchanan**  
**Ho Hua Chew**  
**John B. Cobb, Jr.**  
**George Derfer**  
**Robert Edgar**  
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**Christoph Wasserman**  
**Dagmar Wasserman**  
**Janet L. Weathers**  
**Jean Woo**

Lifetime Hartshorne memberships are available for a one-time fee of \$1,000. This money is deposited directly into the CPS Endowment Fund. Interest earned on that money is more than most annual memberships. The one-time fee also reduces administrative costs for the Center. We save time and money by not having to send renewal notices. Benefits for members include knowing that the Center's endowment fund is growing, which enables us to plan for and secure the future.

## Membership Corner



by Daniel Ott

I am glad to tell you of two new additions to our staff at the Center for Process Studies. In September, Lea Appleton joined the staff in public relations and development. And in January of 2000, John Sweeney will join the staff to work in development and business management.

Lea comes to us with several years experience in marketing and public relations working for non-profit organizations. These have included arts organizations and civic organizations. Most recently she has been working as an Adjunct Professor for the Department of Music at La Sierra University in Riverside, California. This summer she began pursuing a Master of Arts in Theological Studies at Claremont School of Theology. Lea has brought many new ideas to the Center and is beginning to implement new strategies for acquiring grants and donations.

John Sweeney will make his return to the CPS in January of 2000. John completed his Ph.D. at Claremont School of Theology in 1993. During John's studies he was part of the staff both at the Center for Process Studies and Process and Faith. Over the past few years John has been teaching Philosophy and Religion at several community colleges, including his most recent work at San Diego City College. John is excited to return to the Center and begin a new phase in his career, and we look forward to having him.

These two will join our Program Director, John Quiring, to constitute the core of the Center's staff. We are looking forward to new things and continued excellence as we, the staff at the Center, seek to serve our members and encourage the further development and application of process thought.



# From the Editor

by June Watkins

It is with a mixture of sadness and excitement that I sit down to write my last editor's column for *Process Perspectives*. I feel sadness because the opportunity to edit the newsletter has been such a blessing in my life. My excitement comes from the anticipation of moving to Pensacola to teach philosophy at the University of West Florida.

When John Cobb first asked me to begin editing the newsletter, I was terrified. It was such an honor but I was afraid I was not ready for the challenge. In the past three years, I have grown in leaps and bounds in my profession, largely due to the helpful guidance of John Cobb, David Griffin, Marjorie Suchocki and Mary Elizabeth Moore. Words cannot express how grateful I am to the Co-Directors for giving me this wonderful opportunity. I have received such encouragement from many people, making this job very satisfying. It is with great sadness that I say good-bye to Claremont and the Center for Process Studies.

With equal excitement, I embrace the next step in my journey toward finishing my Ph.D. program. I have been hired for a sabbatical replacement at the University of West Florida, my *alma mater* for both my undergraduate degree and M.A. The prospect of teaching side-by-side with professors who were my first mentors is very exciting to me. It is really a dream come true.

I say a special good-bye to the staff of the Center for Process Studies. For five and a half years, the center has been my extended family and second home. I have worked side by side with John Quiring. John has been a co-worker, friend, mentor, and advisor. Special thanks go to him for all of his help and

encouragement.

Getting to know many of the CPS members has been the greatest opportunity of all. As a new employee, I was thrilled to answer the phone and speak personally to many people I considered "famous." Now, after numerous years, many of you have become colleagues and friends. I am thankful for this opportunity and hopeful that we will stay in touch.

I leave the newsletter in especially good hands. Leann Long is now the editor of *Process Perspectives*. Leann has an exceptional understanding of process thought and is a gifted writer. She and I have collaborated on this issue and I think you can already see her contributions and talents. Many of you know Leann as Co-Coordinator of the Silver Anniversary International Whitehead Conference in August 1998. She is a Ph.D. student in Philosophy of Religion and Theology at the Claremont Graduate University.

So, this is it. Special thanks to all who have made my time here at Center for Process Studies a very rich and rewarding experience.



## Boston AAR Reception

Please join us for our reception at the AAR/SBL annual meeting in Boston. Come meet your colleagues and friends on Sunday, November 21, from 9-11 p.m. at the Sheraton in the Liberty-A room. It is listed as event AM175 in your AAR program book.

# Journal Update

by Barry Whitney

The next issue of *Process Studies* (Volume 28/3-4, Fall-Winter 1999) will be published late in 1999 or very early in 2000. The issue features a Special Focus Section on Whitehead and Bergson, edited by Randy Auxier. The articles in this section are revised versions of papers given originally at a meeting of the Society for the Philosophy of Creativity in 1993. The authors are Pete Gunter, Carl Hausman, and Randy Auxier, along with a discussion among the three of the themes discussed in the articles.

The regular articles in PS 28/3-4 contain two studies of Whitehead and Deleuze, by Roland Faber (Vienna) and Tim Clarke (England). The remaining articles are written by Edgar Towne (Indianapolis), Duane Voskuil (North Dakota), and William Dean (Denver). Book reviews of recent important books in the field, and abstracts of articles complete the issue.

We are looking for scholars to join our staff of abstractors. We also invite prospective contributors to send short discussion papers (up to 3,000 words) as well as regular articles (4,000-8,000 words) to the editor. And we invite authors of recent books, dissertations and articles to send notice to the editor: Dr. Barry Whitney, *Process Studies*, University of Windsor. PO Box 33830 Detroit MI 48232.

Email: [whitney@uwindsor.ca](mailto:whitney@uwindsor.ca).

Please note that the editor's web site for *Process Studies* is located at: <http://www2.uwindsor.ca/~whitney/blw.process.html>

Now that the journal has caught up to the calendar year, double issues will be published each spring and fall, commencing in 2000.



# CALENDAR

## **AAR Reception**

Sunday, November 21, 1999  
 Sheraton: Liberty A  
 9-11 P.M.  
 Wine/Fruit/Cheese

## **Franklin Woo**

December 2, 1999  
*Current Trends in Chinese Thought*

## **David Wheeler**

January 20, 2000  
 Title to be Announced

## **Jerry Gill**

February 3, 2000  
*Polanyi's Postmodern Philosophy*

## **Sang Yil Kim**

February 10, 2000  
*Self-Reference: Logical and Mythological Approaches*

## **Roland Faber**

February 22, 2000  
*The Infinite Movement of Evanescence: A Relativist Analysis of the Pythagorean Puzzle in Deleuze, Whitehead, and Plato*

## **Hermeneutics Conference**

February 25-27, 2000

## **Multicultural Conference II**

April 14-15, 2000

## **Whitehead Summit**

Claremont, January 4-6, 2001

# MEMBER PAPERS

Upon request, the following papers are available free of charge to center members. Papers not offered during your term of membership are available for \$3 each for members and nonmember. You may also download these and others from the CPS web site at <<http://www.ctr4process.org>> in the *Members Only* section.

## **John C. England**

*Walking Paths of Wisdom:  
 Moving Beyond Western Theologies*

## **Nicholas Rescher**

*Trapped Within History?  
 A Process-Philosophical Refutation of  
 Historicist Relativism*

## **Zhoxing Su**

*Postmodernization:  
 A Challenge for Chinese Culture*

## **Sandra B. Lubarsky**

*The Reenchantment of Judaism*

*Send announcements to:*  
**Editor: Process Perspectives**  
**Center For Process Studies**  
**1325 North College Ave.**  
**Claremont, CA 91711**  
**E-mail: [leann@ctr4process.org](mailto:leann@ctr4process.org)**

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