

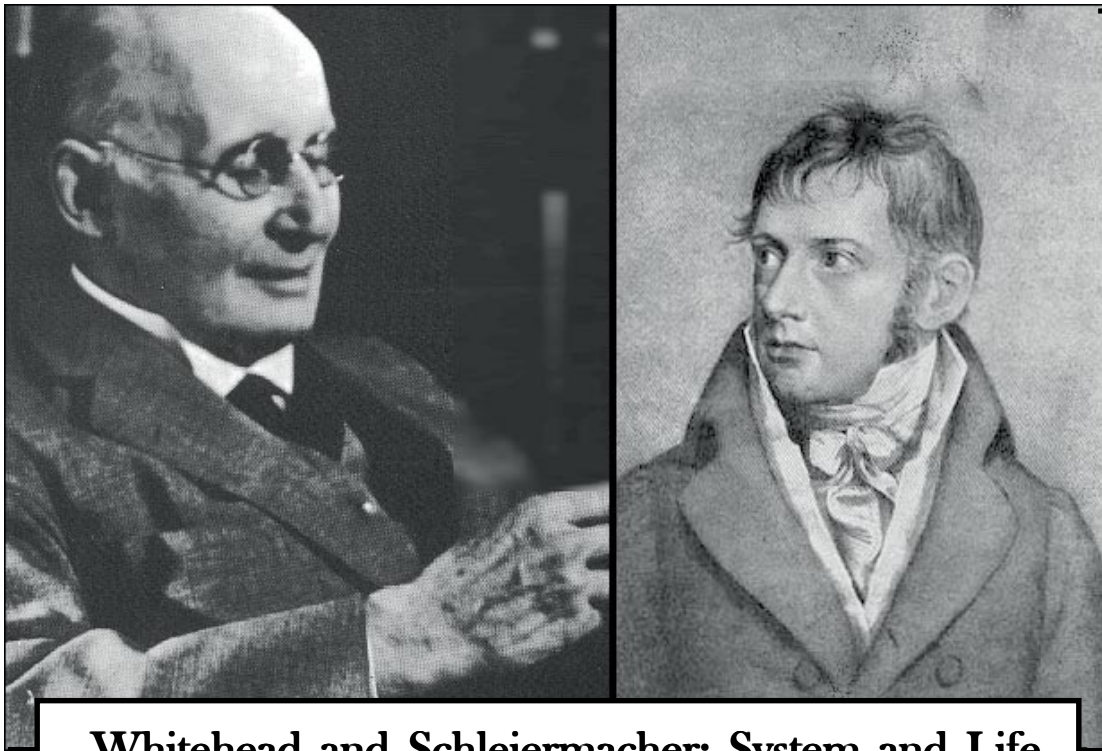
Newsletter of the Center for Process Studies

Process . Perspectives

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Whitehead and Schleiermacher: System and Life

Plus seminar summaries:

Meijun Fan, Arlette Poland, Clyde Tidwell and David Brewer, Carol Christ, John B. Cobb, Jr., Herman Greene, Philip Clayton, and Robert Mesle

And process-inspired literature:

Thoughts on a Theme by a Seagull
by Josefina Burgos

a relational worldview for the common good

Process Perspectives

The Newsletter of
the Center for Process Studies

a relational worldview for the common good

Volume 26.1 Winter 2002-2003

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J.R. Hustwit

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CONTENTS

Feature Articles

Whitehead and Schleiermacher *by J.R. Hustwit* 3

Thoughts on a Theme by a Seagull *by Josefina Burgos* 5

Seminars

Arlette Poland: *Science of Mind and Process Thought* 8

Meijun Fan: *Chinese Aesthetics and Process Thought* 9

Clyde Tidwell and David Brewer: *Democratic Processes and Education* 10

Carol Christ: *In the Wake of Matricide* 11

John B. Cobb, Jr.: *The Chicago School* 12

Herman Greene: *Ecology, Human Culture, and Social Justice* 13

Philip Clayton: *Samuel Alexander's Emergentist Theism* 14

Robert Mesle: *Suffering, Meaning, and Ethics* 15

Interconnections: News from Around the World

Hungarian / Central European Whitehead Association 16

The Role of the International Process Network 16

The Whitehead Society of Korea 17

An American Empire? 17

Process Thought and Organisation Studies 17

Announcements

Process Summer Course and Retreat 17

Remembering David Havens Newhall 18

Process Thinking and Educational Reform 18

Beardslee Consultation 19

3rd Annual Whitehead Film Festival 19

Other Events in the Process Community 19

From the Center

Library Report *by Alan Van Wyk* 20

China Project *by Zhihe Wang* 20

Membership Report *by John Sweeney* 20

Visiting Scholars Report *by John Quiring* 21

Calendar 22

Member's Papers 22

Next Issue: Spring 2003

Whitehead and Schleiermacher: System and Life

by J.R. Hustwit

The theme of systematic thought and its adequacy to life was the framework within which the works of Alfred North Whitehead and Friedrich Schleiermacher were explored and compared in the recent conference: *Whitehead and Schleiermacher: System and Life*. The conference was held March 6-8, and experts in both fields of Whitehead and Schleiermacher scholarship attended.

Roland Faber of the University of Vienna gave the first presentation, entitled "Whitehead at Infinite Speed: System as Event in an Historical Perspective." Faber located Whitehead's system historically in the development of systems. Within the main paradigms of the development of philosophical systems—substance, subject, process, and difference—Faber proposed that, at their *folds*, three philosophers highlight their change: Leibniz, by integrating substance and subject; Deleuze, by transforming process into difference; and—in between—Whitehead, by fusing subject and process. Precisely this *shift* from subjectivity to process and, moreover, the fluency of *all* paradigms in Whitehead's thought may reveal his historical importance: he deconstructs substantiality for subjectivity, but transforms subjectivity into process that, as it is essentially beyond subjectivity, anticipates difference.

Jacqueline Mariña of Purdue University presented her paper, "Schleiermacher Between Kant and Leibniz: Predication and Ontology." In this paper, Mariña argued that Schleiermacher was heavily influenced by both Leibniz and Kant, and that Schleiermacher's adoption of Leibniz's complete concept (and the resultant theory of predication) necessarily entails conflict with his Kantian two-source theory of knowledge. Mariña explained that this disharmony accounts for the opaqueness of the *Dialektik*.

Krista Duttenhaver, a student at Notre Dame University, also explored the topic of historical influences in, "Relative Freedoms: Spinoza's Influence on the Systems of Schleiermacher and Whitehead." This paper focused on each thinker's conception of the Ultimate, and how genuine freedom was possible in light of that Ultimate. Unlike Spinoza's "infinite substance," Whiteheadian creativity is not God (at least by the time of *Process and Reality*), but it shares with infinite substance the trait of bare ultimacy. Also, for both Whitehead and Spinoza, what is *causa sui* (self-caused) is that which is really real. Duttenhaver also argued that Schleiermacher adds an ultimate causal principle to Spinoza's system, which permits him to

account for the relative and real freedom of entities within his system, which Spinoza cannot finally do. This addition gives Schleiermacher's system the capacity to embrace the Spinozistic idea of organic naturalism without falling into Spinoza's mechanism—something Schleiermacher explicitly wishes to avoid.

Marjorie Suchocki then read her paper, "System Without Certainty." In this paper, Suchocki discussed how Whitehead's system is unusual—it is open in the sense that it is not final. As adequacy to the data of experience is an important criterion for Whitehead, the system must be subject to revision and reconsideration when one is confronted with empirical evidence that does not fit within preestablished categories. Suchocki then demonstrated this

by questioning Whitehead's system on the basis of the new data being provided to physicists and cosmologists through the Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe. Suchocki claimed that data from WMAP challenges aspects of Whitehead's notion of God, the applicability of the actual entity model to dark energy, and the relation of dark energy to creativity.

Jack Verheyden, Professor Emeritus at Claremont School of Theology, then delivered the keynote address, entitled "Mapping the Land of Beginning Again." Verheyden pointed out that at the time of *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, Schleiermacher was vehemently opposed to the idea of system, claiming that systems require too much distance to take in religious life, which is immediate; a system's drive towards universality smothers individuality; and finally, that the rigidity of systems discourages novelty. The later Schleiermacher's thought, however, was heavily systematized, although he never used the word "system." Verheyden argued that despite the structure, organization, and coherence of the later Schleiermacher, he was always careful to avoid his earlier criticisms of system by basing his thought on actual religious consciousness and life.

Christine Helmer of Claremont School of Theology, who lectured on "Novelty and System in Schleiermacher's Thought," assessed the current state of theology as fragmented. Individual theologies such as feminist, liberation, or process theologies serve the purpose of addressing the needs of the marginalized, but have little opportunity for genuine dialogue or integration into a system with a wider scope. Helmer proposed a "trans-discursive theology" as a



Eilert Herms and Philip Clayton

remedy. Two conversely related issues would inform such a trans-discursive theology. On the one hand, theology is issued from distinct individual perspectives. It is the individual that is the privileged locus for articulating theology, and it is the principle of individuality that introduces novelty into religion. On the other hand, the possibility of communicating one's theology in a way that can be understood by another, as well as of conceiving theology in such a way as to individuate theology's common features, requires the stable features of system. Helmer proposed a system that can both fix religious concepts to make discourse possible and, at the same time, do justice to the individual perspective.

Anna Case-Winters of McCormick Theological Seminary presented "System and Dynamism: The Category of the Divine." Case-Winters explained the criticisms frequently made by postmodern theorists. In the face of these criticisms, Whitehead's system is a unique one that may be defended against the charge of foundationalism, on the one hand (Rorty), and of failure to take the experiencing subject sufficiently into account (postmodern concerns), on the other. She then argued that a system such as Whitehead's can effectively present the "dynamism" that characterizes lived experience of the world. A brief description of his system and its categories illustrated that Whitehead's is an anti-dualistic, connected pluralism in which central elements are allowed to flow back and forth into one another (as do "the one" and "the many"). Dynamism pervades content and method in Whitehead's system. This dynamism's chief exemplification is Whitehead's doctrine of God, which describes a truly relational deity that experiences and responds to the world in novel ways at every moment.

David Brown, a student at Claremont Graduate University, presented "Whitehead and Schleiermacher: Some Prenuptial Considerations." In this paper, Brown noted that rather than pursuing an alternative way of thinking about reality, Schleiermacher's project is simply to describe the ways in which reality is actually represented by human intellects. Brown's suggestion is that while it may be possible for Whitehead's system to absorb much of Schleiermacher's thought, the reverse does not easily obtain. Brown went on to argue that in Schleiermacher, the intentional content of our thoughts and judgments requires a background of certain other 'notions' that are not themselves intentional and may thus be regarded as (logically) primitive. Brown suggested that Schleiermacher intends for these primitives to be understood as making claims about thought and representation—not about the metaphysical reality that stands behind such representations. As epistemic primitives, these notions are not available for theological treatment as conceived of by Schleiermacher in his *Brief Outline*. Brown concluded that, by the same token, Schleiermacher's theology would be allergic to Whitehead's God *insofar* as it functions analogously to an epistemic primitive.

The paper by Philip Clayton, who will be joining the faculty of Claremont School of Theology and Claremont Graduate university

next year, was entitled "Systematizing Agency: The (Dialectical) Wedding of Internal Relations and Autonomous Agents." Proposing that one of the most urgent problems in the area of conflict between Schleiermacher and Whitehead is that of agency. Clayton attempted a constructive (rather than historical or exegetical) thinking together of these two figures on the topic of agency. Construing both positions as panentheistic, Clayton developed a theory of *semi-autonomous* agency. Although finite agents are essentially semi-autonomous, the divine agent is semi-autonomous only because of a prior decision to self-limit its creative activity in order to allow other autonomous centers of activity. Clayton suggested that all human actions participate in the divine act, and yet in such a fashion that their autonomy of action is preserved. Indeed, the degree of autonomy must vary from the lowest level, at which particles and forces exercise causal powers in a completely law-like manner (yet not external to God); through the biological level, at which variations between individual organisms dictate outcomes to a greater degree; through the level of the higher primates and most human actions. Paradoxically, on this view, the fully autonomous action would be the one in which the act is perfectly in accord with the creative intents of the divine agent and hence would be an action that, though perfectly mine, would also be fully a divine action as well.

Julia Lamm, of Georgetown University, read a paper entitled "Open Systems: The Art of Doing Theology." Lamm echoed Christine Helmer's concern that contemporary theologies have so internalized postmodern critiques that they are hopelessly fragmented.

Lamm then pointed out that Schleiermacher was searching for a "system beyond system," which she identified with an open system. Lamm argued that Schleiermacher's theology and philosophy contain two elements in particular that can make possible and sustain an open system in the twenty-first century. The first is his *dialogical-dialectical method*, which is confident of the lure of truth at the same time that it remains empirical and provisional. The second is his ontology, according to which reality is understood primarily in

terms of *force* or *power* rather than substance. These two principles together, and all that they entail and contain, make possible a system that is not an ideology. They are necessary, adequate, and promising resources for engaging in a robust systematic theology—robust not in the sense of closed and totalizing, but in the sense of art: a composition that dares to ask the question of truth, dares even to answer it, without claiming to control it.

David Ray Griffin, of Claremont School of Theology, offered "Feeling and Morality in Whitehead's System." In this paper, Griffin explained how Whitehead sought to account for the presuppositions of our moral life, and to point to an ideal resolution of our basic moral tension, within a system of thought that embodies a thoroughgoing naturalism, albeit a *theistic* naturalism. In the first section, he discussed Whitehead's ideal of a philosophical system in relation to his concern with the inevitable presuppositions of daily life, including moral



John Cobb and David Brown

presuppositions. The second section dealt with his conviction that an adequate system must be both naturalistic and theistic. The third section introduced the central feature of his worldview, panexperientialism with organizational duality, according to which all individuals have feelings. The fourth and fifth sections showed how Whitehead's "critique of pure feeling," based on this panexperientialism, allows him to defend three presuppositions of morality: human freedom, normative values, and ultimate importance. That is, the self-determination in every actual occasion guarantees agency; the conformation of feeling between God's appetite of eternal objects and the individual's initial aim provides a metaphysical basis for our notions of better and worse; and finally, God, as experiencing the entire world, allows for ultimate importance in that God's experience transcends finite perspectivalism. In the final section, Griffin explicated Whitehead's treatment of the way in which our feelings of God, including our intellectual feelings *about* God, can provide a basis for a humanitarian ethic and for an ideal resolution of our basic moral tension.

Eilert Herms, of Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, shared his paper entitled "Process and God in Whitehead and Schleiermacher." Herms pointed out that although the two thinkers have similarities, the differences in starting point and method between the two results in differences in their respective doctrines of God which have "undeniable religious impact." Herms criticized Whitehead's system on three points. Herms then went on to discuss how Schleiermacher does a better job of addressing these points. Herms concluded by stating that Whitehead fails to fully address the givenness of experience and that the resultant worldview of Whitehead fails to lay any sort of responsibility on the individual. Schleiermacher's insights, though not perfect, provide a more satisfactory account of religious life.

John Cobb, who shared his remarks on systems and the applicability of Schleiermacherean and Whiteheadian systems to religious pluralism, concluded the conference. Schleiermacher posits one normative criterion for judging all religious traditions (a function of the relationship between the immediate and the sensible self-consciousness), according to which various religions can be evaluated. In contrast, Whitehead defines religion as what one does with discipline in one's interior life. Cobb argued that this definition can be applied to all religious traditions and does greater justice to the variety of religious life.

Cobb admitted that in the past, he had been hesitant to write a systematic theology, because as an individual of limited perspective, he was always engaging new material. So, any systematic theology one can write would be limited in scope, and fail to encompass as many viewpoints and concerns as possible. This is one postmodern concern with system. However, Cobb argued that the postmodern critique of system has gone too far. New insights always tend towards exaggeration, and the postmodern criticisms of system, although just, have become overstated. Consequently, to combat this exaggeration, the climate of the Academy warrants a revitalization of the idea of open systems. . . .

Thoughts on a Theme by a Seagull

by Josefina Burgos

"And some of the reasons why the logicians' rigid alternative, 'true or false,' is so largely irrelevant for the pursuit of knowledge."

- A.N. Whitehead

It is the end of April and the pelicans are back. They have returned to their summer abodes, and I can watch them flying by in all their serene and majestic splendor. They are here once more, as they have been every year before, letting me know that the world is just as it should be. They have returned to this place that I share with them, which—I am sure—they experience in a different way. They experience it in a pelican way. The ocean surface, for instance, looks transparent to them while it appears opaque to me. They are able to see teeming life forms moving under the clear water, while I see nothing but a shiny, emerald green, moving surface. While I delight in the changing colors of the ocean under stormy skies, or shining blue and green in the sunlight, their delight most certainly comes in other ways.



"Is it really the same place?" I ask myself. Yes and no. These beautiful shores have many dimensions. . . one of them is the dimension I inhabit; another is the one that belongs in the pelican universe. And there are so many others: the seal universe, the clam universe, the kelp universe, and of course, the seagull universe, into which I had a chance to step for a brief moment, a few days ago. They overlap, these universes, like sheets of translucent paper of different colors piled one on top of the other. From within its world, the pelican, I am sure, has taken notice of that life form, the human, which seems to have a thing about wandering along the water's edge—a creature without a name to keep a distance from; as marginal in its perception of reality as the seals on the rocky shore. The pelican is the master species in its universe and has no idea of the privileged destiny of the human.

A certain dullness arising from this last thought compels me to pause. . . "Is it *really*," I ponder, "such a privileged destiny?"

It is this question that brings back the memory of a seagull, and a scene about life and death that I witnessed on the beach not so long ago.

THEME

There was something strangely unusual about this bird, about the way it behaved in the water. It did not feed and play between incoming waves, as seagulls often do—lifting up in the air with graceful effortless just before a breaking wave is about to engulf them.

This one, on the contrary, was allowing itself to be splashed, wave after wave; to be enfolded in white foam from which it emerged gasping, shaking its head and fluttering its wings to gain back its balance. I stopped and stood there watching for a while, until it was obvious that it was unable to fly. There were no other gulls in sight. It was alone, abandoned, gasping for breath, wave after wave. It didn't take long for me to realize that I was looking at a dying bird, and I fought an urgent impulse to get closer, seize it, and take it back to the safety of the dry sand. But I knew better. If I tried, I would get nipped by the powerful beak, and furthermore, something in its demeanor told me that what I was witnessing was happening in a place where I did not belong: this was a moment situated beyond the boundaries of my world.

At one point, the gull drifted into shallow waters, and for a second, I hoped that it would stand up and walk to a safe spot on the sand. But without hesitation, it turned around and faced the immensity of the ocean once again, letting itself slide back towards the churn of the breaking surf where it was unavoidably going to perish. There was something fiercely serene, profoundly calm, and subdued in the manner in which the bird turned its back to the beach and swiftly let itself float towards the waves. In anguish, but also in awe, I watched it disappear and resurface, wave after wave, each time more tired, its gulps for air becoming weaker and weaker. There were no desperate flutters, no panicked shrieks, no efforts to get away. On the contrary, as it let itself be carried farther away into the breakers, it was clear that it was willingly surrendering to its fate. There was something immense in what I was witnessing. I realized that it was a sacred moment, a moment of deep understanding, of deep harmony, between a creature and its universe. The rapport between creature and world reached me and filled my heart with profound reverence. Because I did not have the courage to wait for the end, and because, in a way, I felt myself peeking into a moment of ultimate intimacy, I turned my back, and with a heavy heart, I walked away.

The next morning, as usual, I went out for my daily walk. It was again a fine sunny day, just as the day before had been. The world looked sparkling and beautiful, and by now I had forgotten all about the blue-gray seagull. But as I walked by I recognized the spot, and on a hunch, I walked up towards the line left by the high tide the night before. Very soon I found the small body lying on its back, face turned towards the sun; the wings peacefully folded against its oval shape; the eyes in a blank, lidless, stare. . . It lay there, quietly, on the warm sand, its feathers softly stirred by the breeze.

"It was all over," I thought, "It was back with *It All*."

I felt it again—that enlarging of my heart. The immensity of the moment I had witnessed came back to me as I evoked the gull's serene surrendering to death, in harmony, like a contented instrument quieting down after a magnificent solo, while the orchestra continues to play on. I felt that it had known a communion with the All, which I,

as a human, could not even imagine. I stood there under the bright sun, with a naked soul, my humanness and its gullness slowly peeling away as I became aware of a profound transformation in my heart. The gull of my story had now ceased to be *just* a gull, and it was with a sense of deep reverence that I found myself tenderly touching the soul of a fellow experiencer—just like me, but in a different, albeit powerful, way. I now understood. This creature had been and still was another weaver of the fabric of the universe. Whatever notion I had ever had of the primacy of the human in the world suddenly faded away, and the blue-grey seagull and I stood now as equals under the bright sky.

THOUGHTS

Sitting in front of the vast ocean today, I realize that there are times in our lives when small episodes acquire magic capacities, allowing us to peek behind the curtains, to move from the dimensions of daily life into dimensions beyond known horizons.

Looking back at that encounter on the beach—a magic episode

in its own right—brings forth, once again, the thought that to experience doesn't always mean to experience consciously. I cannot tell for sure what kind of awareness the gull had of its predicament. At some deep level of being it seemed to know; deeper than I can ever imagine; more clearly than I can possibly fathom. And it didn't seem to care. While I watched its demeanor in the water, I understood that "life" and "death" are words that belong in the human vocabulary alone. The ocean beckoned that day with a different

voice. The gull recognized the call and responded accordingly.

We connect to reality (I continue to ponder) moment by moment, through experience. It is through experience, mostly unconscious, that we are involved in the infinite complexity of the universe, and contrary to what our intellect and self-awareness always lead us to believe, there is no chasm separating human beings from the rest of the universe. We experience so much more than we can possibly analyze! So, if we are able to reach those aspects of our experience that are not unique to us; if we are able to penetrate beneath the human character of our experience into those aspects which we share with other creatures and things in the Universe, we will enter new domains. That is the threshold that, I believe, I was allowed to cross that morning, into a magic world where I met a fellow creature in terms of equality. And what I learned, at soul's depth, is that no experience is more or less important than another. Every drop of it generating in every corner of the universe is what fuels its flow.

It is so, I remind myself—as I watch another pelican formation fly leisurely by—that when we get carried away by the apparent glory of the human destiny, we must not forget that cosmogenesis is not a linear process, with man and his mode of consciousness at the tip. We must always remember that cosmogenesis expands radially, and that humanity is just one of its radii, each of which moves away



from the origin at different speeds of complexification. Man, therefore, is only one part of larger systems, only one representative of Earth's extensive biodiversity. We are just one more mode of being on the Earth and in the Universe. The human mode of experience is just one more mode of experience feeding its flow. That was what that seagull told me that morning. The universe-event experiences itself through all the infinite drops of experience that constitute it at every moment in time. That is why the experience of a dying seabird is as important to it as any other: because the novelty it brings forth contributes to the Universe's becoming.

The experience of a pelican, of an atom, of a seagull dying on the beach, of an algae, of a stone, of a quartz crystal, of a human being watching a seagull die with a heart full of awe—all of these experiences constitute infinite points of view, conscious or unconscious—infinite peeking holes into different dimensions of reality. Each of them, in itself, unifies the rich diversity of the past and is, at the same time, a constituent of the present universe's diversity that will ingress into, and will be unified in a new, vibrant moment of experience. It is thus, then, that moment by moment "the many become one, and are increased by one."

Since the beginning of time these moments of experience have shifted from being mostly unconscious towards increasing consciousness. Thus, within the specific radius of cosmogenesis that eventually gave rise to the human, those increasing levels of conscious experience culminated in self-awareness: through us, then, the Universe has brought forth a mode of experience which, coexisting with infinite others, allows it to consciously contemplate itself in its diversity, and as it evolves, will allow it to become increasingly aware of its nature as an interrelated Whole.

CONCLUSION

"So, my seagull," I sigh—the question still lingers: "Is the human destiny *really* a privileged one, after all?"

"The answer," I tell myself with delight, "Is once again, yes *and* no." "Yes," because in our awareness, and from the specific color of the transparent sheet of paper that *we* happen to inhabit (our universe) we have the capacity, through empathy and imagination, to partially project ourselves into the pelican and the seagull, into that common ground of experience that underlies everything. "No," because self-aware consciousness is not necessarily the only and most important mode of consciousness in the universe: floating behind it are the exquisite feelings of the pelican, playing back and forth on the edge of a breaking wave; the delight of a flower opening wide its petals to the sunlight, and the pregnant pulsing of a star in deep space. Conscious awareness is built upon all these experiences and on the feelings that they elicit. The beauty of the human destiny is, then, to be able to dip into the infinite well of the accumulated experiences of the Universe and bring them into consciousness. It is as if we were destined to be the eyes that, once opened, can contemplate the reflection of the whole body in the mirror; the eyes that can behold the body of the whole, of which they are a part, and become aware of its beauty, harmony, and maybe of a smile being reflected back. . . .

Featured Works in Process Thought

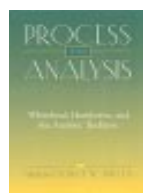


The Divine Decision: A Process Doctrine of Election

by Donna Bowman
283 pages (April 2002)
Westminster John Knox Press

From the Back Cover:

Donna Bowman utilizes the work of process thinker Alfred North Whitehead to develop a doctrine of election that dialogues with the view of Reformed theologian Karl Barth. Taking seriously Barth's contention that election is the best of all words that can be spoken about God, Bowman reinterprets Whitehead's description of God's provision of the initial aim to each entity as the central cosmological and theological fact of universal election. By combining Barth's concerns with process categories, she concludes that both of the two systems are aimed at common theological and philosophical enemies. . . .



Process and Analysis

edited by George Shields
256 pages (November 2002)
SUNY Press

From the Back Cover:

Process and Analysis brings together an unprecedented collection of the world's leading contemporary process and analytic philosophers to explore philosophical topics of common interest. The contributors examine a wide variety of explicit and implicit commonalities and differences of approach to such central philosophical issues as the nature and status of events, time, space, relations, particulars, and God. This unique collection demonstrates that both traditions have important things to say to one another. In fact, a largely ignored conversation between the two traditions has been carried on since at least the days of Whitehead's influence on early Cambridge analytic philosophy. This long awaited volume is an invaluable research tool for scholars and students alike working in the areas of analytic and process philosophy. . . .

Arlette Poland

Science of Mind and Process Thought

Summary by John Quiring and John Sweeney

A CPS seminar on “Science of Mind and Process Thought” was given by Arlette Poland on October 15, 2002. Poland, an attorney and yoga instructor, is currently an M.A.R. student at Claremont School of Theology and is planning to enter the Women’s Studies in Religion program at Claremont Graduate University in the Fall of 2003. She is also training for an interfaith ministry through the Emerson Institute.

Poland is following the lead of C. Alan Anderson, Deborah Whitehouse, and Hyatt Carter in developing a process version of “New Thought.” She distributed a diagram by Anderson and Whitehouse differentiating “Process New Thought” from traditional New Thought, which retains a substantialist metaphysic. Traditional New Thought emphasizes being, substance, immanence, pantheism, emanation, matter-as-appearance, God as Love-Law, law-as-automatic, general possibilities, and self-responsibility. Traditional New Thought *as modified by process philosophy* would emphasize becoming, creativity, immanence-and-transcendence, panentheism, co-creation, matter-as-experience, God as persuasive Love, law-as-habit, tailor-made possibilities, and divine initiative.

Religious Science International, with which Poland is affiliated, branched off from the mainstream United Church of Religious Science, but their teachings are virtually identical. Religious Science teaches Science of Mind. These embodiments of practical philosophical idealism trace back to Emerson’s Transcendentalism and are not to be confused with empiricist cognitive science and philosophy of mind. Poland said Science of Mind is not Scientology, New Age, or Christian Science. New Age, she said, is occult perception, palmistry, and Tarot cards. Where Christian Science says, “matter is error,” Science of Mind says “matter is God in expression.” Where Christian Science discourages going to a doctor, Religious Science would treat you by praying that you find the best doctor, although, in some sense, “you are already healthy and perfect.”

Poland characterized Science of Mind both doctrinally and practically. It is, firstly, panentheistic. There’s “not a spot where God is not,” she said. We are spirit incarnate, some-

times alienated from spirit. “We have the illusion that we are separate, and so we are.” Secondly, thought is creative. “The world presents itself in accord with one’s belief,” says Poland. “What you are looking for is what you are looking with.”

Science of Mind tutors positive responses to the situations of our lives, because “it is done unto you as you believe.” While it is too simple to just say, “Think positively and everything will be all right,” our thoughts do shape our lives. More strongly, “our thoughts create our world”—our reactions are part of the experience itself. This puts responsibility on individuals for the quality of their lives—“our own evolution.” We can choose differently, based on an “attitude of complete gratitude.” Some seem to choose destructive paths, but we do not have to do so. Instead of giving in to road rage, for example, we are urged “to become peace in each moment.”

Poland suggested that the process concept of “creativity” is like Science of Mind’s “absolute” in its relation to the relativities of the world. She diagrammed the “initial aim” in process thought as input from God for our highest possibility. Poland then argued that the actual occasion prehends the past and selects the highest possibility in the present moment. Also the way Science of Mind’s “subjective universal mind” or “group consciousness” is modified by new thoughts is similar to the way the consequent nature of the process God takes in the experience of the world.

Severe questioning from the audience punctuated Poland’s presentation and continued unabated after the break. Some critics equated Religious Science with Christian Science. One respondent read a statement charging that Science of Mind is hyper-individualistic, misses the suffering of the world, asserts rather than argues, is mushy and vague, is Pollyannaish, excuses anything, lacks tough-mindedness, is un-testable, unfalsifiable, and generally ignores real science. What are the limits of belief? Can you think your way out of genetic diseases, manias, and addictions? Science of Mind practitioners in the audience joined with the speaker in a lively discussion, suggesting responses, with examples, to some of the charges leveled by the critics. . . .



Meijun Fan

Summary by J.R. Hustwit

Chinese Aesthetics and Process Thought

On October 22, 2002, Meijun Fan, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Beijing Normal University, gave a lecture entitled "Process Thought in Traditional Chinese Art."

Fan began by giving an overview of the characteristics of process thought, as it is found in both Whitehead and traditional Chinese philosophy. Both systems view reality as being constantly in a process of change. Dr. Fan provided five examples of how the ideals that are central to Whiteheadian thought are also core ideals of traditional Chinese aesthetics.

The first of these similarities finds expression in the Chinese concept of *Qi*, which is both the origin of life and an eternal creative process. Whereas western worldviews typically view the world as full of inert, static, unchanging substance, traditional Chinese philosophy sees the world as being involved in a constant dynamic process of transformation. Fan provided an example of a painting by Mi Youren that portrays a favorite mountain of his family. The landscape does not portray the scene realistically, but emphasizes the river, mists, and clouds in order to express the inner active life of even the most "stable" elements of nature. *Qi* is responsible for "rhythmic vitality," which is the pattern and pulse by which it transforms the world. This rhythmic vitality is what is responsible for beauty in the world. Consequently, an accurate portrayal of rhythmic vitality is the highest goal of traditional Chinese art forms.

The second ideal that Dr. Fan discussed was that of harmony. Fan defined harmony as the "best relationship among all the elements of the universe." She pointed out that all three Chinese philosophies (Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism) universally condemn violence of any type as a result of Chinese commitment to harmony. Fan pointed out that, because of this attitude, China never produced a heroic epic or any paintings about war. The content of Chinese art is typically peaceful.

Also, Fan pointed out that wholeness is an important ideal in Chinese aesthetics. Chinese artists in the classical period are typically more concerned with totalities than with individuals. That is, individual entities have no meaning outside of their context. For this reason, Chinese paintings typically do not contain nearly as much detail, or specific attention to individuality, as western paintings. Dr. Fan also read a beau-

tiful piece of literature by Guo Xi that expressed how the flowers, water, mist, clouds, and rocks are all parts of an intricate and complex whole.

Related to the ideal of wholeness, the concept of community plays an important role in Chinese art. Fan read a poem entitled "Atop the Youzhou Terrace" by Chen Zi'ang:

*Seeing no ancients before me,
No followers behind;
Thinking of the vastness of heaven and earth;
Sad and lonely, the teardrops fall.*

This poem, although written in the first person, never uses the word "I" and avoids referring directly to the subject. Fan explained that this is typical of Chinese literature due to the anti-individualistic attitude. Similarly, Chinese novels will usually have several protagonists instead of just one. In fact the plot of one particular novel has 108 protagonists.

The final ideal that Dr. Fan discussed was that of "the beyond" or the infinite. She explained that there are two aspects to the Tao: that of beyond, and that of vicinity. The beyond, or infinite aspect of the Tao, is more important because it more accurately reflects the true essence of the Tao. Consequently, seeing into the beyond became a significant principle in Chinese aesthetics. For example, Dr. Fan discussed three painting techniques that allow for a special perspective whereby one can see parts of a landscape that one would be unable to see in real life. The technique of "elevated distance" allows one to see the top of a mountain from its base, "deep distance" allows one to see the back of a mountain from the front, and "flat distance" allows one to see distant mountains from nearby slopes. Also, Fan pointed out that many Chinese paintings use empty space dramatically in their paintings to express the dichotomy of existence in the void, or finitude and infinity.

Dr. Fan concluded her seminar by discussing how these ideals that traditional Chinese and process thought share can be instrumental in encouraging dialogue between China and the West. This will be important as the peoples of both China and Western cultures face the same global crises. . . .



Clyde Tidwell and David Brewer

Summary by John Sweeney and John Quiring

Democratic Processes and Education

“Democratic Processes and Education” was the title of a CPS seminar by sociologists Dr. Clyde Tidwell and Dr. David Brewer on October 29, 2002. Tidwell is the founder and former director of the Democratic Processes Center in Tucson, Arizona. He founded and taught for the Tucson Senior High School Accommodation Program. Brewer is Research Associate at the Democratic Processes Center. For 20 years, he was a Program Analyst and Social Research Analyst with the California Department of Corrections.

David Brewer opened the seminar by discussing the “Democratic Processes” method of intervening in the lives of young people who have been left out of mainstream society. He claimed that the “Democratic Processes” high school achieved a 98% graduation rate for a clientele that would have been expected to dropout of regular high school. According to Brewer, by refusing to say that the young people have fallen through the cracks and by saying instead that they have just fallen *into* the cracks, there will be incentive to try to help them. Like anthropologists, perhaps, Brewer and Tidwell seek out truant youth—“kids that everybody hates,” kids who are often found to be brutalized at home, kids who are homeless. Inspired by a mental health movement in which mental health workers go into the community looking for the homeless, develop relationships, and lure the homeless into obtaining services, Tidwell and his teachers “accompany” the youth long enough to gain an opportunity to listen and learn, to find out more about the fundamental problems of each youth. This is a labor-intensive, time-consuming process.

The Democratic Processes approach to alternative education seeks to first understand the “predispositional context of meaning” in which the youth operates. To that end teachers seek to cultivate interpersonal sensitivity, openness, mutual respect and cooperation based on a democratic presumption of the equal dignity and worth of all individuals. At-risk students are not seen as dependents to be rescued but as “actors elaborately involved in constructing their . . . world.” Creating a “warm, personal environment of equals” is thought to be more condu-

cive to transformation than trying “to control, correct, convert, or manipulate” the student. Also, the teacher(s) need to suspend their own moral judgments as well as their desire to proactively “fix” the problem(s) each student is having. The “means” by which a student returns to society are based upon that student’s needs, not upon some outside imposed set of prescriptions. Accordingly the “means” may be unusual (perhaps even immoral).

Clyde Tidwell, himself a victim of child abuse, captivated the audience by recounting stories about several of the 2000 students with whom he has worked over the past 30 years. Following are brief accounts of a few of the stories:

Because Oscar’s mother was a prostitute, he was sent to live in a foster home with ten other boys. The foster home was an abusive situation. When Tidwell came to meet him, Oscar confronted Tidwell with a barrage of vulgarity. Tidwell’s unexpected response, which was to wait until Oscar exhausted himself and then to hug the boy, disarmed Oscar. Eventually, Oscar begged Tidwell to help him. Many years later, Oscar, now married with two children, told Tidwell that his mother was off the streets and living with his own young family.

A 17-year-old female was caught up in an incestuous relationship with her father who was giving her money in exchange for sex. Neither the father nor the daughter was willing to stop the relationship under the current conditions, and the daughter was not willing to press charges. The daughter preferred to end the incest, but she needed the money to get away from home. Also, the mother was in complete denial about the relationship. Tidwell’s unconventional response involved diverting the father away from the daughter by recommending that the father take up with “high-class” prostitutes and arranging for the father to set up a trust fund for the daughter. After graduation from high school, the daughter left town and did indeed go to college.

During the discussion session, Tidwell responded to questions by continuing to tell stories as well as by providing some observations on life that he has learned from his years of working with at-risk youth. Among these observations were: (1) cooperation is valued in many aspects of life, but not on tests where cooperation becomes cheating, (2) working with at-risk kids involves dealing with fear, guilt, and one’s own sacred areas, (3) adult human beings clearly like to procreate, but basically do not know how to live with children, (4) democracy demands that we regard each and every person as equal in dignity to ourselves, and (5) human beings are born free and yet invent myths that bargain the freedom away. . . .



Carol Christ

Summary by Sara Moslener

In the Wake of Matricide: A Feminist Process Paradigm?

Dr. Carol Christ, director of the Ariadne Institute for the Study of Myth and Ritual, presented a preview of her book *She Who Changes: Re-imagining the Divine in the World* (due in summer from Palgrave/Macmillan) in a paper entitled “In the Wake of Matricide: A Feminist Process Paradigm?” on November 13, 2002.

As complementary though distinct theological positions, feminist thought and process philosophy offer one another critically helpful insights that strengthen their mutual commitments, according to Dr. Christ. Relying on Charles Hartshorne’s work regarding common theological mistakes, Christ argues that the claim to divine omnipotence, omniscience, unchangeable nature, unsympathetic goodness, infallible revelation and immortality are rooted in matricide, the rejection of the female body. Though Hartshorne and other process thinkers never recognized this connection, Christ contends that their efforts offer feminists in the study of religion the insights needed to guard against anti-body/female currents at play in religious discourse. Likewise, for Christ, feminist critique allows process philosophy to realize its potential as a revolutionary set of ideas.

Christ explains how both process thought and feminist critique share a common effort to challenge the Platonic tradition that posits the world as a series of dualistic relationships. In traditional philosophy, the divine exists as a distinct and unchangeable entity over and against the changing body of humankind. A feminist critique of this paradigm, as Christ outlines, points to the male bias created in this bifurcation. Men, associated with the higher realm of reason, the soul and the divine, maintain an ontological privilege over women who are associated with the natural, the body and death. Even more, the divine conceived in this set of relationships must always be male. Yet Christ also applies a critique based on Hartshorne’s analysis of common theological mistakes, most notably the commonly held assumption of divine immutability. In doing so she links feminism’s desire to return the divine to the world with process philosophy’s assertion of a God who changes.

Likewise, Christ encourages feminists in the study of religion to adopt process philosophy’s affirmation of *panentheism*. This particular understanding of the divine-world relationship affirms a deity who shares an intimate connection with the creation, that is, the divine is manifested and acknowledged in every being, thus rendering it sacred. How-

ever, the divine power is not merely submerged into the creation, but continues to guide the “creative process of the universe” with a persuasive, rather than coercive, power. Christ is especially concerned with the concept of divine sympathy that process philosophy espouses as a way of understanding the divine presence on a personal level, as a deity who loves beyond all expectation. However, Christ also includes a discussion of divine anger and asserts that the divine sympathy characterized by love also includes necessary and creative expressions of anger that lead to healing and transformation.

At a critical point in her lecture Christ engaged the debate over essentialism—defining women according to characteristics of embodiment and relational connectivity. Though many feminists are uncomfortable with setting up a category of woman that potentially reaffirms old stereotypes, Christ offers process philosophy as a corrective. In the process paradigm, embodiment and relational connectivity are affirmed in women as well as men. That is, they are not merely feminine traits, but human traits linking all to the divine and one another. Likewise, she engages the philosophical trend of deconstruction in relation to the *via negativa*, or negative way, that feminist theologians such as Mary Daly and Elizabeth Johnson have found helpful. The *via negativa* asserts that our knowledge of the divine is limited to claims asserting what God is not. While process philosophy also affirms the fragmentary nature of all knowledge, Christ pointed out that the *via negativa* is dependent upon total divine transcen-



dence and is thus not part of the process paradigm. Unlike deconstruction, process philosophy asserts that knowledge of the divine, though fragmentary, is possible and that relationships are not fixed in a matrix of unequal power relationships. For Christ, the contribution of process philosophy to feminist studies in religion lies in its ability to envision the divine as intimately connected with and concerned

for the well-being of creation. The contribution of feminism to process studies is the insistence that the body and the divine body be understood in physical and not solely metaphysical terms. .. ∴

John B. Cobb, Jr.

The Chicago School

Summary by J.R. Hustwit

On December 3, 2002, attendees arrived at the planned CPS seminar to find that the scheduled speaker, Gary Dorrien, had been stranded in Detroit due to heavy snowfall. John Cobb was gracious enough to substitute and give a lecture on the history of the Chicago School.

The Chicago School was a dynamic group of like-minded scholars teaching at the University of Chicago Divinity School from its founding in 1890 until the early 1950s. Cobb divided the history of the Chicago School into three epochs.

William Rainey Harper was the founder and the first president of the University of Chicago. It was under Harper that the first epoch of the Chicago School would arise in the form of a commitment to a socio-historic understanding of theology. That is, Christianity was understood to be one historical movement alongside others. Consequently, Christianity ought to be studied historically in the sense that one studies the history of a social movement as opposed to an intellectual or political movement.

Harper's view could be called a form of "culture Protestantism," a term used later to criticize the German theology that led the church there to succumb to Hitler. That is, he thought that American culture was, and should be, largely shaped by liberal Protestantism. So, Harper was interested in exploring the synergies and congenialities between culture and Christianity.

Shailer Matthews was the most prominent exponent of this school of thought. The concepts that were buzzing around academic culture at the time were science, democracy, and, to a lesser degree, personality. Matthew's method required that Christianity be couched in terms of science and democracy. For example, all monarchical language in scripture and liturgy was decidedly anti-democratic, so the liturgy should be changed to facilitate the symbiosis of Christianity and democratic culture.

Matthews was a social activist and church leader as well as an academic. The liberal church's social gospel, which focused on improving conditions in this life as opposed to the next life, was congenial to the socio-historical method.

In the late 1920s, the growing interest in science caused a shift in the interests of the Chicago school. Many scientists were producing religious and other types of literature, and so a sort of cross-pollination introduced scientific methodology into the study of religion. Whitehead was, of course, representative of this trend, but his thought was, upon first reading, puzzling to the Chicago School, as he was much more theistic than they had been. The Chicago School's doctrines of God had lacked a great deal of unity and content up to this point. In 1927, Henry Nelson Wieman

gave a lecture in Chicago explaining the Whiteheadian system. The faculty was so impressed and fascinated that they invited him to join the Chicago faculty. And so, the Wiemanite, or neo-naturalist epoch had begun in Chicago.

Wieman's theology was psychological, mystical, and radically empirical. Radical empiricism includes in experience much more than sense experience. His ideas were motivated by the belief that "we need to know that in which we put our faith." As a result of this principle, God was described as what was wholly trustworthy in the world. This emphasis on trustworthiness required that his method be empirical rather than speculative. Eventually, this emphasis on having certainty about God led Wieman to turn against Whitehead, as he eventually came to the conclusion that speculation gets in the way of faith. Wieman, in his concern for spiritual growth, advocated that people interact with one another in small groups dedicated to personal growth. He also pointed out that the process of creative transformation in the world frequently changes our goals, so to be goal-oriented is frequently counter-productive, as the goals we work toward should not be constant but should change in the process.

In the early 1950s, Charles Hartshorne ushered in the third epoch of the Chicago school, which grew out of Wieman's neo-naturalist theology. However, Hartshorne was a student of Whitehead, and the school in this period for the most part became Whiteheadian. Whereas Wieman's method was radically empirical, Hartshorne's was equally rational. That is Wieman looked to experience as a basis for his thought, Hartshorne employed rational proofs. Unlike Wieman, Hartshorne worked as a metaphysician. Instead of following Whitehead's speculative method, he used reason to demonstrate the existence and nature of God. Nevertheless, his understanding of God and the world was very similar to that of Whitehead.

In 1955, tensions at the University of Chicago caused the corpus of like-minded scholars to disperse to other universities. After 1955, the Chicago School would exist only in diaspora. Cobb pointed out that the unity of the Chicago School through these three differing epochs can be expressed in negations. All three epochs were anti-authoritarian. They even rejected the authority of current formulations of the sciences, despite their fascination with the discipline. The Chicago School was also anti-Humean and anti-Kantian. Despite the rich diversity of method and system in the Chicago School over the years, the ideas produced during this period act as the fertile ground out of which process thought grows.

Herman Greene

Summary by Max Johnson

Ecology, Human Culture, and Social Justice: Imagining an Ecozoic Future

On January 21, 2003, an enthusiastic audience greeted Mr. Herman Greene as he presented a paper entitled “Ecology, Human Culture, and Social Justice: Imagining an Ecozoic Future.” Although Mr. Green is an attorney with Lewis, Anderson, Greene and Hinkle, P.C., of Chapel Hill, N.C., his primary interests are in ecology, sustainability, and human development. So in addition to his “day job,” he also serves as the Administrative Director of the International Process Network; as a member of the Advisory Board of the Center for Sustainable Enterprise at the Nenan-Flagler Business School of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and as President of the Center for Ecozoic Studies, also based in Chapel Hill.



The term “Ecozoic” (“house of life”) was coined by notable ecologist Thomas Berry, whose work first brought our current ecological and social crisis to Greene’s awareness. In fact, it was the relationship between the writings of Berry, process thought, and a document developed by a group of ecologically-minded nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) during March, 2000, called the Earth Charter, which formed the triune structure of Greene’s presentation.

Greene articulated the main points of his theory, starting with what he calls the “social process triangle.” This is the fact that there are economic, political, and cosmological dimensions to human life. Within the cosmological sphere, there are the further sub-categories of society, culture and self. Part of the problem today, Greene said, is that we have a very truncated sense of self—primarily as a consumer and *homo economicus*. As a result, when people think about how to solve the *ecological* problem, they usually think of it as an *economic* problem. Greene stressed that although many of the suggestions that emerge from this kind of thinking are important, what is really needed is a fundamental change of cultural attitude. Otherwise, there is little chance that any of these ideas will have any lasting impact.

According to Greene, the insights of Thomas Berry and process thought can help bring about the necessary change. Berry argues that the fundamental flaw in the development of the modern western mind is that humans see themselves as being above and external to nature. This is a far cry from the pre-modern worldview, in which humans understood themselves as indebted to nature and the environmental forces. We must return to looking at the processes of nature as our primary guide.

Greene argues that process thought can support Berry’s position by providing the strong philosophical background and metaphysical framework needed to help bring Berry’s vision to fruition. Green argued that “process thought offers a dynamic, holistic understanding of the nature of reality that seems to correspond to the type of understanding necessary for genuine ecological thinking.”

However, simply having an effective philosophical view is not enough. What process thought must really do is to inspire leaders who are devoted to correcting errors in what he calls the “cultural mind.” Unchecked, these errors have, in the past, led to both social and personal “pathology.” Greene stated that process thought was on the right track, but it would be more effective if it focused even more specifically on ecological and environmental issues than it currently does.

After briefly mentioning the Earth Charter, which he believes is a useful articulation of the goals of the Ecozoic movement, Green concluded by speaking of what he (following Berry) calls the “Great Work”: the daunting but necessary task of bringing the Ecozoic era into being. Greene sees the Ecozoic as the next global shift in earth history, following the Mesozoic era, which ended with mass extinctions, and the (current) Cenozoic era, which seems headed for a similar fate. Unlike those eras, however, the Ecozoic will be heralded by a new set of sensitivities to ecological needs, a greater realization of how the individual self is shaped by nature, and a deeper understanding of the radical interdependence of all living creatures. Since we are all inhabitants of the earth, Green pointed out, no one is exempt from involvement in this daring project. “It is a task that will require change in every aspect of human society, and the hope for the earth’s very future depends on our success or failure.”

Philip Clayton

Summary by Alan Van Wyk

On February 3, 2003, Philip Clayton, who will be joining the faculty at the Claremont School of Theology as Professor of Theology and is currently teaching at Sonoma State University, presented a seminar entitled "Exploring New Resources for Process Thought: Samuel Alexander's Emergentist Theism." Clayton expressed his interest in a broad understanding of the process tradition, exploring historical resources that can advance the contemporary process discussion. It is in this sense, Clayton argued, that Samuel Alexander can push process thought in a productive direction. The issues that Clayton explored in his seminar revolved around the idea of "emergence," seeing how far, with the help of Alexander, that idea can be pushed. Clayton offered an initial circumscription of Alexander's thought in two theses: first, that there is nothing unchanging in the world; and second, that "deity" is a quality that emerges out of a growing world. This second thesis can also be stated as an argument for the increasing deification of the universe.

In filling out these two theses, Clayton first noted the importance of the mind/body configuration in Alexander's thought. Alexander relies on this analogy to understand many of the topics he discusses, not the least of which is the God/world relation. Clayton began by noting Alexander's understanding of the mind/body configuration as the mind/brain problem, noting the distinction between a 'weak emergentist' position and a 'strong emergentist' position. A weak emergentist position will argue that causal activity primarily remains in matter, or the brain, even when a mind is argued to emerge from the brain. By contrast, a strong emergentist position will argue that the mind, once it has emerged, will provide some causal influence over matter. Alexander, Clayton argued, is a weak emergentist. For Alexander, there can be only one causal system, and priority goes to the physical.

Returning to the mind/body configuration as a general schematic, mind is, for Alexander, a metaphysical principle. A question then arises as to how mind emerges out of matter. Given Alexander's historical position—a theologian at a time of sweeping Darwinian influence—a second but similar question arises: how to think theism and evolution together. Clayton argued that both questions can be answered by a similar causal pattern comprised of six emergent steps, five of which are derived from Alexander's thought. Alexander begins his thought by placing space-time within the mind/body con-



Samuel Alexander's Emergentist Theism

figuration, arguing that time is to space as mind is to body. From this, the first step of Alexander's pattern is to see space-time as originally differentiated by various motions, producing matter out of these motions. In the second step of this pattern, this emergent matter becomes organized at the molecular level. The third step is for this organized molecular matter to further organize and bring forth life. Clayton here added a fourth step to Alexander's pattern, arguing that it is necessary at this stage to understand sentience as emerging out of living organized matter. The fifth step of this pattern occurs when some of this sentient living organized matter becomes the bearer of mind. In the sixth and final step deity emerges. For Alexander, as well as Clayton, it is from within this historical process that the emergence of mind can be understood, as well as the relation between evolution and deity. For Alexander this entire process is driven by a general *nisus*, or intentionality, in space-time.

After developing Alexander's emergentist position, Clayton turned to the nature of religion and deity in Alexander. Religion, Alexander argues, has two poles, an affective side and a metaphysical side. Alone, neither of these aspects is satisfactory for religion. When these two poles are brought together, they provide religion with a pervasive skeptical position. Whereas the affective pole of religion may point towards a knowable ground, the metaphysical side always demands a sense of mystery. For Alexander, all that can be known of the divine are its attributes. Returning here to the developmental scheme, Alexander argues that the divine is only known as the next step of emergence. Deity is the next step and the last step of emergence, such that the divine is the mysterious infinite of the universe.

Clayton concluded by arguing that there is much that contemporary discussions of process thought can learn from Alexander. Within the emergentist framework, Clayton specifically pointed to the way in which Alexander's emergentism avoids the objectification of humans in relation to God. Alexander's thought also provides a compelling account of the relation between part and whole in any system. Clayton finished by noting three problems he had with Alexander's thought. First, as a correlate of his weak emergentism, human minds only contemplate and enjoy in Alexander's system, they exert no causal efficacy. For Clayton, this does not give adequate due to human agency. Second, according to Clayton, Alexander is hard pressed to develop an adequate theodicy given that all that occurs in the world occurs in God. Finally, Clayton questioned whether the notion of the 'deification of the world' is overly optimistic. Even with these questions, the stimulating discussion that followed Clayton's presentation showed the creative potential of reading Alexander and process thought together. . . .

Robert Mesle

Suffering, Meaning, and Ethics

Summary by Jincheol O

On February 11, 2003 Dr. Robert C. Mesle, Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Graceland College in Lamoni, Iowa, led a CPS seminar titled “Suffering, Meaning, and Ethics.” He is the author of several books on process thought and theodicy, including *Power and Value in Process Philosophy and Theology*, *Process Theology: A Basic Introduction*, and *John Hick’s Theodicy: A Process Humanist Critique*.

Mesle’s first point was that the traditional theodic answer is not adequate to solve the problem of suffering. Second, he maintained that one should find a practical theodic answer, which offers creative meaning and practical ethics, beyond all sentimentalism. Mesle’s main proposal was that rather than finding the hidden meaning of suffering, one should create “whatever we can in the face of suffering.”

Mesle opened the seminar by sharing his experience teaching theodicy. He asked the audience to ponder the questions: What do theodicies do? What problem are people trying to solve in relation to the problem of suffering? What matters for people who suffer is to find some noble meaning in their pain. Mesle examined a traditional understanding of suffering, which says that suffering is not bad but becomes good through God’s hidden purposes. The notion that God causes or allows evil for some good reason is problematic. This traditional hypothesis contradicts the fact that most of the suffering of life—such as that caused by cancer and drunk drivers—is pointless. In one’s efforts to find some hidden divine purpose in suffering, one often creates images of God’s goodness and love that are antithetical to human goodness and love. In other words, what is good and loving for God often appears as the opposite of what is good and loving for us. This notion creates very confusing theological problems. The main problem is that one often distorts the concepts of love in dangerous ways. Mesle insisted that one should avoid nurturing theology that provides comfort at the expense of distorting our images of love. In addition, Mesle stated that while trying to find a hidden meaning of suffering, one often undermines the fact

that one should find a way to prevent evil.

Mesle proposed another path to approach the meaning of suffering. Rather than “finding” a hidden meaning of suffering, he suggested that one should “create” meaning in the face of suffering. What is implied by “creating” rather than “finding” meaning is the question, “How shall we respond when something bad has happened?” In other words, it seeks an ethical response when bad things happen. The idea of creating meaning has a threefold implication. There can be real ethical and psychological value in acknowledging that most suffering is simply tragic and pointless. Also, there can be real value in allowing people to feel their rightful anger and grief without trying to steal away their right to grieve by calling the suffering part of God’s loving plan. Furthermore, it implies that there can be real value in seeing that suffering usually comes to us absurdly—without purpose or point—but that it still lies within our power to create some good out of it.



Finally, Mesle cited Daniel Day Williams’s work “Suffering and Being in Empirical Theology,” from *The Future of Empirical Theology* (edited by Bernard Meland) in order to answer the question “How can one get some good out of suffering?” Williams provides three practical elements to create whatever good is possible in the face of suffering: suffering as identification, suffering as communication, and suffering as healing. . . .

“The glorification of power
has broken more hearts
than it has healed.”

*Alfred North Whitehead
Religion in the Making, p.55*

Interconnections

...news from around the world

Hungarian and Central-European Whitehead Association

by Gabor Karsai

There is a growing interest in process thought among Central and Eastern Europeans. Besides Hungary, there are scholars in other countries of the region—such as Austria, Bosnia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia—who also study Whitehead and process thought.

The Association's primary function is to coordinate efforts in Eastern and Central Europe to introduce Whitehead's philosophy to the academy and the general public, and to apply process thought in different fields. By establishing regular communication and collaboration between scholars in the region, the Association would encourage people to come to do research, to attend conferences organized by the Association, to discuss region-specific problems from a process point of view, and to work on efficient applications. Also, it would organize and support translation and publication projects.

The Association would be an integral part of IPN, with all its help in realizing the ideals of the international process community.

At the initial stage of the project, there is hardly any possibility to get support from Hungarian sources. We think it requires at least three years to have enough influence in the academic life. Therefore, the Association must be financed from abroad in the beginning. After this initial stage, there will be a better chance of support from Hungarian foundations and institutes as well as from other European countries or from the European Union itself.

Plans and projects of HUCEWA include translating books (this project is already underway), monthly seminars, international conferences, Summer Whitehead Camps for young people, a website, a newsletter, and a journal. . . .

The Role of the International Process Network

by Herman Greene

The International Process Network is important. Sometimes, a project is so important that it must be done regardless of our other engagements. This is how I feel when I think of IPN.

If I do indeed have a role to play in the work of IPN, it has to do with the public role of process thought. We are at a point of civilizational breakdown. It is not simply the war in Iraq. It is the ending of industrial civilization. The contributions of modernity have exhausted themselves and now there needs to come to the fore a new constructively postmodern movement. People need more than a choice between liberal modernity and neo-traditionalism. Even the moderns themselves and the neo-conservatives need this choice. The entire world is seeking a way out of our current dilemma. I strongly believe process thought has a role to play in this. As far as I can tell, the closest parallel to what we must be about is Confucius and his followers who invented a mode of civilizational presence and sensitivity for China and much of the East. China for years was grounded in a humanistic and cosmological understanding that guided the life of the people. Maybe I have spoken out of ignorance, but this is what I understand.

We have an emerging global civilization that needs a new interpretation of relationships, including relationships with the natural world, and a new set of sensitivities, and a grounding in the cosmological process of the universe. Process thought can play an important role in this. I believe we must not see the progress of process thought as a struggle for recognition within academic disciplines, but as a struggle to develop new categories or meaning, understanding and value in a constructively postmodern age, one that I, following Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme, call the Ecozoic Era. To this I commit myself, and because I believe process thought has such an important role in this, I likewise commit myself to providing leadership through the International Process Network.

As you are aware, IPN is not an organization in itself. It is to provide a network and synergies among those who follow this line of thought. In certain areas, however, I believe IPN will have to take a leadership role in the world of process thought. For me these include the following:

1. Placing an emphasis on the public role of process thought (such as David Griffin's work on global democracy).
2. Understanding, undergirding, and teaching the Earth Charter, which is an essential document in bringing into being the Ecozoic society.
3. Expanding the availability and influence of process thought through translations, conferences, publication of "primer" books on areas of process thought, and creating links for those involved in process thought to relate to each other.

IPN is the power of relationship. . . .

Interconnections

...news from around the world

The Whitehead Society of Korea

by Jinsun Park

The Whitehead Society of Korea held its 7th annual conference at Keimyung University in Daegu, Korea, on February 8, 2003. The topic of the conference was "Whitehead and Contemporary Culture." Also, in the business sessions, the Whitehead Society of Korea governing board elected Sang Yil Kim, professor of philosophy at Hanshin University, as the next president of the Whitehead Society of Korea. Further information on the Whitehead Society of Korea can be obtained at <http://whitehead.co.kr>.

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An American Empire? Globalization, War, and Religion

by Catherine Keller

On September 26-28, 2003, the Third Annual Transdisciplinary Theological Colloquium at Drew University will consider the complex ramifications—not least, religious—of the mounting suspicion that the United States is mutating into a global empire. To what extent does the current practice of the U.S. administration continue an older trajectory, to which the rhetoric of "imperialism" was often applied? Or does the term "empire" now signify a new, postmodern, deterritorializing entity? What is the relationship between transnational corporate globalization and U.S. militarization? Given the explosive religious elements that have infused the events and ideologies surrounding and proceeding from September 11—not to mention a long history of U.S. secular messianism—this conference will focus especially on political theologies of empire and anti-empire. What ethico-religious conversations and strategies can best foster the just peace that the warring Abrahamisms so differently demand?

The keynote address will be delivered by Edward Said of Columbia University. Said is also one of the leading public intellectuals in the U.S., and has been an outspoken critic of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. The conference will feature several public lectures including Chandra Muzaffar; John B. Cobb, Jr.; Otto Maduro; and Catherine Keller.

A scholarly symposium for invited guests will include papers by David R. Griffin, of the Center for Process Studies; Douglas Meeks, of Vanderbilt; Nestor Miguez, the Argentinean liberation theologian; Kathryn Tanner of the University of Chicago.

Also, a variety of workshops will be offered for the public on Saturday morning. .. ∴

Conference: Process Thought and Organisation Studies

On July 24-25, 2003, The University of St. Andrew's Chapter for Applied Process Thought in Scotland is hosting the Applied Process Thought conference, "Process Thought and Organisation Studies."

There has been a growing use of certain aspects of process thinking, sometimes encapsulated in other phrases such as "complexity theory," within the social sciences and particularly within organization studies. Much of this work has taken place outside the process philosophy canon itself, to the detriment of both groups. The main purpose of this conference is therefore to provide a forum at which interested scholars from the sciences and social sciences and process philosophers can gather and develop their thinking.

There is no expectation that papers at this conference should necessarily concentrate on the predominant process philosophies of Whitehead and Bergson to the exclusion of other process thinkers. Bearing this in mind, the conference seeks to address themes of process thought and organization studies, applications of process thought in the social sciences, comparisons of process theology and open theology as mechanisms for understanding the role and impact of God, applications of process thought in the sciences, reconciliations of process thought and science, process thought as analytic philosophy, and demonstrations of the utility (or otherwise) of a panexperientialist argument. For more information, please visit http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~capt/conference_home.htm. .. ∴

Process Summer Course and Retreat

Drs. Marjorie Suchocki and John B. Cobb, Jr., will be teaching a summer course and retreat entitled "Theology of Belonging." It will be held June 23, 2003 to June 28, 2003, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at Claremont School of Theology. The daily schedule will be as follows:

- 9:00-12:00 Regular class.
- 12:00-2:00 Picnic break.
- 2:00-4:00 Film.
- 4:00-5:00 Dialogue between film and morning class.
- 5:00-5:15 Closing vespers.

The morning session is available for 1 academic credit. The package deal for non-academic credit is \$250 for the week. Continuing education credit is also available. For more information, call (909) 447-2559. .. ∴

Announcements

David Havens Newhall 1917-2002

by John Hammond

The cause of humane civilization lost an eloquent voice recently with the passing of David Newhall, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Portland State University, who died in Claremont on August 24 at age 85. I knew David during most of the 35 years that he was at PSU. In his work at the University and his community service in Portland, he certainly embodied Whitehead's ideal of the constructively engaged thinker and citizen.

David graduated from Pomona College in 1939 with a B.A. in philosophy, went on to an M.A. at UCLA and received a Ph.D. in philosophy from Princeton in 1948. He held teaching positions at Smith College and then William and Jefferson College before coming to Portland in 1955 to found a philosophy department at the then new Portland State College. He remained head of the department until 1969. David retired from full time work in 1986, but continued teaching and community work in the Portland area. In 1996, he and his wife, Geraldine, moved to Claremont. It was for them something like coming home since the two of them had met as students at Pomona.

David's major areas in philosophy were ethics, social philosophy, and the history of philosophy. The two thinkers who inspired him most were Whitehead and Gandhi. He taught courses on Whitehead, but equally important, he brought to his teaching of other courses an enthusiasm for Whitehead's insights on the history of philosophy, the nature of value, the ideals of civilization, and the nature and importance of philosophy itself. Students were bound to hear about Whitehead in ways that made them realize "here is someone important to know."

A lifelong interest in peace (he had been a conscientious objector during WW II) led him to extensive research into the life and writings of Gandhi. From this came teaching, publications, and numerous public presentations on Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence.

During his years in Portland, David was much in demand as speaker and panelist on a variety of pressing social topics, including war and peace, unrest on college campuses, civil disobedience, and the proper stance of organized religion toward these matters. It would be hard to overestimate the positive contribution to the community of his many thoughtful and clearheaded discussions of these issues.

David was a gentle man, compassionate, kind, eminently courteous, and fair. These qualities, along with keen intellectual curiosity and a relish for teaching made him a favorite for many PSU students and a model of academic excellence for his col-

leagues. We who knew David mourn his death and celebrate the years of outstanding and dedicated service. The Divine Lure will need to exert itself with unusual vigor to evoke another such life from the flux of events! .. ∴

Process Thinking and Educational Reform in an Era of Globalization

by Zhihe Wang

Educational reform is high on the agenda in China, and the Chinese have much to teach North Americans about this. Alfred North Whitehead wrote an influential book on education, and process thinkers broadly have been keenly interested in reforming education at all levels. Building on the highly successful conference in Beijing last summer, the China Project of the Center for Process Studies plans a conference in which Chinese educators and American process thinkers can share ideas relevant to the needed reform in both countries.

Participants will be leading process scholars in North America and presidents, deans, and department directors from China as well as other Chinese scholars. The conference will include lectures, paper-and-discussion sections, and working groups. The first few days, Nov. 1-4, 2003, the conference will be held in Claremont to hear lectures about the problems and possibilities of higher education in the United States. After leaving Claremont, the Chinese educators will visit colleges and universities elsewhere in the United States.

Plenary speakers will include George Allan, John B. Cobb, Jr., John Gingrich, David Ray Griffin, and Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore.

The Conference will offer discussion groups on the contribution of process philosophy of education to contemporary educational reform, integrating education within the process of globalization, Whiteheadian education theory and Chinese traditional educational thought and practice, Marxism and process education, China's educational reforms today, process thinking and postmodern education, aesthetics in the globalization era, environmental education in the globalization era, educational reform under market economic theories, the use and misuse of standardized examinations, and the reform of college administrations: theory and practice. The conference will be co-organized by the Center for Process Studies, Claremont Graduate University, and the Transcultural Studies Institute, Beijing Second Foreign Language University. .. ∴

Announcements

Beardslee Consultation

The Beardslee Consultation is an ongoing project of Process and Faith that convenes every year to engage in interreligious dialogue concerning prominent social issues. This year's consultation is entitled *People of the Book and Ecological Issues*, and will culminate in an inter-religious panel discussion with Ronald Farmer (Christian), Liora Gubkin (Jewish), and Muzammil Siddiqui (Muslim), with Marjorie Suchocki as moderator.

This panel discussion is open to the public and will be held on May 5, 2003 from 7:00-8:30p.m at Temple Beth Tikvah, 1600 N. Acacia, Fullerton, CA.

For more information, call Process and Faith at (909) 447-2559.

3rd Annual International Whitehead Film Festival

Shortly after the completion of this year's wildly successful film festival, the dates for next year's film festival have been announced. The 2004 International Whitehead Film Festival will be held on January 14-17, 2004, beginning with dinner and a film. On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, we will run a "Why Whitehead?" seminar from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., with an afternoon (2:00 p.m.) and evening (7:30 p.m.) film.

Other Events in the Process Community

April 11-12, 2003: **John Cobb**: Lectures at Green Lake Church in Seattle, Washington.

April 25, 2003: **Jay McDaniel**: "Creation Theology," Washington DC, Annual Conference of the American Baptist Church.

April 25, 2003: **Joseph Bracken**: "Emergent Monism and the Classical Doctrine of the Soul," Midwest Division of the American Theological Society in Chicago.

April 25-26, 2003: **John Cobb** will be speaking at *Voices of Faith: A Conference for Progressive United Methodists*. Crowne Plaza Ravinia Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia.

April 28, 2003: **Joseph Bracken** will be giving a talk at

the Advanced Seminar in Religion and Science at Lutheran School of Theology.

May 1-4, 2003: **Marjorie Suchocki**: "Christian-Buddhist Dialogue" in Indianapolis.

May 22, 2003; **Joseph Grange** will be speaking on the work of David Hall at Trinity University, San Antonio, TX. It is a 3-day ceremony in honor of his work. Hall recently died after doing much radical work on process philosophy. Contact the conference organizer, Roger Ames at rt.ames@hawaii.edu. Richard Rorty, Bob Neville, and Roger Ames are also plenary speakers.

May 30, 2003: **Pete Gunter**: "Temporal Hierarchy in Bergson and Whitehead," at conference on "Knowledge, Value, Meaning as Process," University of Saskatchewan.

May 28-31, 2003: **John Cobb** will be speaking at "Knowledge, Value, Meaning as Process" at the University of Saskatchewan. **Brian Hendley** will be presenting a paper, "In Search of the Elusive Whitehead: A Cautionary Tale", to the Conference on "Knowledge, Value, Meaning as Process" at the University of Saskatchewan.

June 1-3, 2003: **David Griffin**: Four lectures on "Thy Kingdom Come: Christian Faith, U.S. Imperialism, and Global Democracy," at Christ Church Cathedral in Louisville, Kentucky. For more information, contact Rev. Helen Jones at hjones@aye.net, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church.

June 6, 2003: **John Cobb** will be the luncheon speaker at the Desert Southwest Methodist Federation for Social Action, Mesa Sheraton, Mesa, Arizona.

June 6-7, 2003: **John Cobb** will be speaking at the *Mobilization for the Human Family* Conference at All Saints Church, Pasadena, California.

June 14, 2003: **John Cobb** will be workshop leader for the TREES conference, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA.

July 7-12, 2003: **Dan Dombrowski** will be leading two sessions at the Summer Institute of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy. One session will be on "Divine Beauty: The Aesthetics of Charles Hartshorne" and the other will be entitled "Rorty vs. Hartshorne on Metaphysics."

July 12, 2003: **Pete Gunter**: "Creativity, Whitehead, and Environmentalism: Philosophy in the Real World," at the Process Philosophy of Education conference in St. Paul, Minnesota.

November 22, 2003: **The Open and Relational Theologies Group** will meet at this year's AAR in Atlanta for their inaugural meeting, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. John B. Cobb, Jr., Clark Pinnock, and Lynne Lorenzen will present papers.

Library Report



by Alan Van Wyk

Inspired by the ground-breaking work of the “System and Life” conference, the Library has created a new “Schleiermacher and Whitehead” bibliography. If you visit the “Members Only” section of our website at <http://www.ctr4process.org>, you will notice that, at the moment, this bibliography is rather short, a fact that further emphasizes the creativity of the conference. If the conference papers are any indication though, there is much fruitful work that can come from reading Schleiermacher and Whitehead together, and we expect this bibliography to rapidly increase.

Secondly, the Library is extremely pleased to announce a new addition to our collection: a numbered, limited edition of the two-volume set of *The Letters of William James*, generously donated to the Center by Carl Procida. This collection of letters and photographs was edited by William’s son, Henry James, and published in 1920 by the Atlantic Monthly Press, of Boston, Massachusetts. The collection is an invaluable resource for understanding the cultural and social milieu in which William James’s thought emerged, as well as providing a glimpse of his thought as it developed in these personal and professional correspondences. We are extremely grateful to Mr. Procida for allowing us to make this treasure available.

And so a final note of gratitude to all those who have donated materials to the Library. The Center’s membership list creates for us a connection to an abundance of important historical material. Your contributions provide an amazing depth and complexity to our holdings.

China Project



by Zhihe Wang

Since the China Project is planning an international conference on Process Thinking and Educational Reform in China, during the fall of 2003, we hope to translate and publish Whitehead’s *The Aims of Education* quickly. We believe that Whitehead’s philosophy of education will provide valuable insights for this reform. We need \$3600 to complete this translation project.

Thus far, eight Chinese scholars have visited the Center for Process Studies. Nine Chinese scholars are planning to be visiting scholars. At the same time, the China Project is planning to organize other process scholars to lecture in China.

Also, Wenyu Xie, George Derfer and Zhihe Wang are editing a book titled *Whitehead and China*—largely based on the Beijing Conference papers. It will be published in English in 2003.

Finally, the board voted to establish a scholarship for a Chinese graduate student who will write a dissertation in the area of process thought. The scholarship is to be awarded by the co-directors of the Center for Process Studies. Contributions will be greatly appreciated. For more information, contact Zhihe Wang at zhihe@ctr4process.org or call (909) 621-5330.

Membership Report



by John Sweeney

Process Studies 31.2 was mailed in mid-February 2003. Please contact the Center if you are a CPS member and have not yet received your copy of PS 31.2. Renewal notices were mailed out in early March 2003. Please note that a membership can be renewed, using MasterCard or VISA, on the CPS website, <https://astro.tstonramp.com/ctr4process/join/renewal.htm>; this page is secure. The policy of CPS is to give members at least three opportunities to renew their memberships. For a Hartshorne Lifetime Member (a one-time donation of \$1,000) there are no renewal notices.

Please renew as promptly as you can in order to avoid any interruption in receiving either *Process Studies* or *Process Perspectives*. If you have questions about your membership, please contact me—either via e-mail at sweeney@ctr4process.org, telephone at (909) 621-5330, or by post at 1325 North College Avenue, Claremont, CA 91711-3154. Thank you.

“Other nations of different habits are not enemies: they are godsend.”

Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, p.298

Visiting Scholars Report



by John Quiring

Professors Robert Mesle and Barbara Hiles Mesle of Graceland University in Lamoni, Iowa, are CPS Visiting Scholars during Spring Semester, 2003. They are concurrently Visiting Faculty at Claremont School of Theology where they are co-teaching a course titled "Suffering and Meaning."

Robert Mesle is Professor and Chair of Philosophy and Religion at Graceland University in Iowa. He is the author of five books and 50 articles. His books include *Process Theology: A Basic Introduction*, and *John Hick's Theodicy*. Dr. Mesle is on the Advisory Board of the journal *Process Studies*, and is Book Review Editor for *The American Journal of Theology and Philosophy*.

On February 11, he gave a CPS seminar titled "Suffering, Meaning, and Ethics: a Conversation for Ministers, Theologians, and Everyone." Mesle is beginning manuscripts on process philosophy and non-theistic religious naturalism, and a problem of evil paper, "What Shall We Say to the Torturer?"

Barbara Hiles Mesle is Professor of Humanities at Graceland University. Her field is English Literature. She has created courses on Literature by Women, Business and Professional Writing, Gender and Communication, the British Renaissance, 19th Century Novels by British Women, and the writing of Toni Morrison.

In addition to reading *Process and Reality*, she is writing a paper for the Highlands Institute conference in Budapest, studying Toni Morrison, Jane Addams, and work in women's spirituality. On April 8 she will give a CPS Seminar on her research, "Toni Morrison on Suffering and Evil." ..

Thanks to Hartshorne Members

The co-directors and staff of the Center for Process Studies would like to gratefully recognize members who have honored Charles Hartshorne by purchasing a lifetime Hartshorne Membership:

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Lifetime Hartshorne memberships are available for a one-time contribution of \$1,000. This money is deposited directly into the CPS Endowment Fund. Interest earned on that money is more than most annual memberships. This membership also reduces administrative costs for the Center. We save time and money by not having to send renewal notices. One benefit for members is knowing that the Center's endowment fund is growing, which enables us to plan for future development. A Hartshorne Lifetime Membership is also tax deductible, less \$400 for lifetime journal and newsletter subscriptions.

CALENDAR

Except where noted, the following seminars are scheduled from 4:10 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in the Haddon Conference Room of the Butler Building at the Claremont School of Theology. They are free and open to the public.

Toni Morrison on Suffering and Evil

Barbara Mesle
April 8, 2003

The Mechanics of Concrescence: Quantum Theory and Process Metaphysics

Michael Epperson
April 23, 2003

Process Thought and Womanist Theology

Monica Coleman
April 29, 2003

Conferences:

Knowledge, Value, Meaning... as Process

University of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

May 29-31, 2003

<http://www.usask.ca/usppru/#conferences>

Process and Education

University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota

July 11-14, 2003

<http://www.apped.org>

Process Thought and Organization Studies

University of St. Andrew's, Scotland

July 24-26, 2003

http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~capt/conference_home.htm

MEMBER PAPERS

Upon request, the following papers are available free of charge to Center members. Papers not offered during the term of membership are available for \$3 each for members. You may also download these and others from the Center for Process Studies Web site at www.ctr4process.org in the *Members Only* section.

Clyde Tidwell and David Brewer

A Theory of Personal Democracy

and

A New Look at Dropouts

Carol Christ

In the Wake of Matricide: A Feminist Process Paradigm?

Herman Greene

Process Thought for What?

and

Ecozoic Ideas for 2002

Robert Mesle

Suffering, Meaning, and Ethics

Please send correspondence to:

J.R. Hustwit, Editor

Process Perspectives

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e-mail: jrhustwit@ctr4process.org

Make checks payable to CST/Center for Process Studies and mail to: Center for Process Studies, 1325 North College Avenue, Claremont, CA 91711. U.S. dollars only, and drawn on a U.S. bank, please. VISA and MasterCard are also accepted.

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