An Introduction to Process Philosophy
Chicago Philosophy Meetup

November, 2014

Key Figures: Alfred North Whitehead [W], Charles Hartshorne [H], David Griffin [G]
Key Forerunners: William James [J], Charles Sanders Peirce [P], Henri Bergson [B]

Biography:
Peirce (1839-1916)---“one of the greatest philosophers of all time” [Karl Popper]
James (1842-1910)---“that adorable genius” [W]
Bergson (1859-1941)---“the first philosopher to take Time seriously” [Samuel Alexander]
Whitehead (1861-1947)---“extraordinarily perfect as a teacher” [Bertrand Russell]
Hartshorne (1897-2000)---“an indefatigable philosophical scholar” [Andrew J. Reck]
Griffin (1939- )---“the leading proponent of process theism” [Eugene T. Long]

Selected Works Quoted from (complete primary bibliographies available online):
DN---“The Doctrine of Necessity” [P], Weiner, op cit.
LM---“The Law of Mind” [P], Moore, op. cit.
MEW---“The Moral Equivalent of War” [J], McDermott, op cit.
MGE---“Man’s Glassy Essence”, [P], Moore, op. cit.
SI---“Science and Immortality”, [P], Weiner, op. cit.
WPI---“What Pragmatism Is,” [P], Weiner, op. cit.
What is now termed ‘process philosophy’ is a century old, largely American school of thought that tries to do justice to change as well as to permanence. Its roots are in the writings of psychologist/philosopher James, and two of his friends, American scientist/philosopher Peirce and French philosopher Bergson. Its first full expression was in the remarkable academic career of Whitehead. The Anglo-American Whitehead served first as a professor of mathematics at Cambridge University, where he co-authored *Principia Mathematica* with his student Bertrand Russell, second as a professor of applied math at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, where he developed his own version of the theory of relativity, and third, in his ‘retirement years,’ as a professor of philosophy at Harvard University. Hartshorne was an American philosopher and amateur ornithologist who served at Harvard as Whitehead’s graduate assistant and as the first editor of Peirce’s collected papers and who extended process thought into philosophical theology. Griffin is an American philosopher/theologian who, along with Lewis Ford, founding editor of *Process Studies*, and John Cobb, founding director of the Center for Process Studies, helped to establish process philosophy as a distinct school of thought in the 1960s. With Donald Sherburne, Griffin co-edited the corrected edition of Whitehead’s philosophical masterpiece *Process and Reality*. Through numerous writings and international conferences, Griffin and his colleagues have refined and promoted process philosophy, also termed ‘constructive postmodernism’ to distinguish it from relativistic, deconstructive postmodernism.

The following is an amalgam of themes, ‘isms,’ quotes, diagrams, photos, and further readings, intended to convey the spirit of process thought on a variety of issues and to encourage further study. The emphasis here is less on formal argumentation and technical detail than on the significantly overlapping theoretical visions of these six gifted thinkers. The quotes retain the spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and italics of the original texts and are taken from a very selective set of primary sources to simplify production of this text. The time-constrained may find it advisable either to begin with Section II or else to read only the Section outlines.

I. Process History/Methodology/Epistemology/Psychology
A. Assessments of intellectual history
B. Intellectual progressivism or optimism
C. Fallibilism
D. Methodological pluralism
E. Position matrices
F. Radical empiricism
G. Stream of thought
H. Selectivity
I. ‘Darwinian’ epistemology
J. Two modes of perception
K. The role of experience in metaphysics
L. The pragmatic theory of meaning

II. Process Metaphysics
M. Becoming
N. Temporalism
O. Temporal atomicity
P. Temporal asymmetry
Q. Partial self-identity through time
R. Time as objective modality
S. Givenness
T. Novelty
U. Creativity
V. Two modes of causality
W. Process panpsychism
X. Mind as spatial
Y. The creative advance
Z. Inversion of the three qualities distinction
AA. Laws of nature as habits
AB. Indeterminism and freedom
AC. A logic of ultimate contrasts

III. Process Theology
AD. Natural theology
AE. Naturalistic theism
AF. Divine dipolarity or dual transcendence
AG. Divine modality
AH. Divine power and goodness
AI. Divine knowledge
AJ. Divine potentiality, receptivity and suffering
AK. The ontological argument for God’s existence
AL. Other a priori arguments for God’s existence
AM. The compatibility of science and religion

IV. Process Ethics

AN. Moral psychology---Human values are not simply an imprint of the physical or social environment, as some evolutionists maintain. Human ideals spring from various sources, including association and utility, but also idiosyncrasies of brain structure and function, which themselves evolved for reasons unrelated to ethical decision-making. [J]

86. “The aesthetic principles are at bottom such axioms as that a note sounds good with its third and fifth, or that potatoes need salt. We are at once for all so made that when certain impressions come before our mind, one of them will seem to call for or repel the others as its companion. To a certain extent the principle of habit will explain these aesthetic connections…. But to explain all aesthetic judgment in this way would be absurd; for it is notorious how seldom natural experiences come up to our aesthetic demands. Many of the so-called metaphysical principles are at bottom only expressions of aesthetic feeling. Nature is simple and invariable; makes no leap, or makes nothing but leaps,…etc., etc.,---what do all such principles express save our sense of how pleasantly our intellect would feel if it had a Nature of that sort to deal with? The subjectivity of which feeling is of course quite compatible with Nature also turning out objectively to be of that sort, later on. The moral principles which our mental structure engenders are quite as little
explicable in toto by habitual experiences having bred inner cohesions. Rightness is not mere usualness, wrongness not mere oddity, however numerous the facts which might be invoked to prove such an identity. Nor are the moral judgments those most invariably and emphatically impressed on us by public opinion. The most characteristically and peculiarly moral judgments that a man is ever called on to make are in unprecedented cases and lonely emergencies, where no popular rhetorical maxims can avail, and the hidden oracle alone can speak; and it speaks often in favor of conduct quite unusual, and suicidal as far as gaining popular approbation goes.” [J, PP; II, 672]

AO. The aesthetic matrix of value---Ethics rests on aesthetics ultimately in that nothing would matter ethically unless there were organisms or entities with interests, whose quality of feeling could be affected by the course of events [J]. Aristotle was correct that moderation is central to ethics (and aesthetics). Beauty, or the morally best feeling quality, lies in a balance between maximal intensity (complexity and novelty) and maximal harmony (simplicity and order), [P, W, H] and human happiness is largely a function of the moderation of desires. [J, B, P]

87. “In one respect Dewey continues the tradition begun by Edwards, continued by Emerson and Peirce, and brought to a remarkable fruition by Whitehead. This is the recognition of the absolutely basic relevance of aesthetic principles. Intrinsic values are the values of experiences themselves. Utilitarian and moral values are derivatives from, or special forms of, aesthetic values, the values of experiences as such…. Dewey sees that aesthetic principles are far broader than those directly connected with the fine arts. In all living there is immediate satisfaction and dissatisfaction, harmony, discord, relief from (or falling into) boredom, humor (but Dewey is hardly strong on this aspect)---all related to the values that artists are trying to create.” [H, CAP; 99]

88. “Values may be considered under three heads: acting rightly, thinking correctly, and experiencing well or satisfyingly. In other words, goodness, truth, and (in a generalized sense) beauty. But, as Peirce held, the order is wrong. The basic value is the intrinsic value of experiencing, as a unity of feeling inclusive of whatever volition and thought the experience contains, and exhibiting harmony or beauty. If we know what experience is, at its best or most beautiful, then and only then can we know how it is right to act; for the value of action is in what it contributes to experiences. Thinking, Peirce held, is one form of acting, and hence logic as a normative science is a branch of ethics. Both presuppose aesthetics…. Remarkably enough, Whitehead independently arrives at nearly the same conclusion.... Beauty (as an intrinsic value) is, in his words, the ‘mutual adaptation of the elements of an experience’…. Mutual adaptation or harmony is not, however, a sufficient condition of great value. There must also be intensity. And intensity depends upon contrast, the amount of diversity integrated into an experience…. This agrees with the old formula, beauty is unity in variety…. (W)hile the ideal of success is single, the possibilities of failure are dual, and opposite to one another. This is old Aristotelian principle of the golden mean: in the middle is the desirable quality, undesirable are the two extremes…. It is an aesthetic law of experiencing that without the unforeseen there can be no experience…. Creativity guarantees a minimum of value to every actuality…. Determinism is a theory of cosmic monotony, not of cosmic beauty…. In my own study of birdsong, a striking discovery was the positive role of unpredictability…. (T)he evolution of singing is towards maximizing unexpectedness, though always within limits…. (T)he basic idea of beauty as integrated diversity
and intensity of experience is metaphysical, valid for any possible state of reality. There is nothing whatever of anthropomorphic specificity about it. Ethical value, goodness, is not the value of experiences themselves, but rather the instrumental value of acting so as to increase the intrinsic value of future experiences, particularly those of others than oneself. However, the good will, the will to enhance the value of future experiences generally, is itself, as experienced, an element of present harmony, just as hatred is a kind of discord. So the good will is twice good.” [H, CSPM; 303-8]

89. “(O)ur self-feeling in this world depends entirely on what we back ourselves to be and do. It is determined by the ratio of our actualities to our supposed potentialities; a fraction of which our pretensions are the denominator and the numerator our success: thus, Self–esteem = Success/Pretensions. Such a fraction may be increased as well by diminishing the denominator as by increasing the numerator. To give up pretensions is as blessed a relief as to get them gratified…. How pleasant is the day when we give up striving to be young,---or slender! Thank God! We say, those illusions are gone.” [J, PP; I. 310-311]

AP. Contributionism and stewardship---All sub-divine individuals are always contributing novel content to the experiences of God. Insofar as more sophisticated species have rationality and moral responsibility, their one great moral obligation, contrary to moral egoism, is to supply God with the maximum of experiential beauty possible, both within themselves and within individuals they affect. [H] Since human beings have a high degree of freedom among species on this planet, a major responsibility of ours, contrary to ‘speciesism’, is to recognize ourselves as members of a natural community whose fellow members all have some intrinsic value of their own and to promote the welfare of the ecosystem as a whole. [B, W, H, G]

90. “Each moment of experience more or less consciously intends to contribute to future moments; and to be human is to be much more conscious of this contributiveness than the other animals probably can be. But our situation in the cosmos makes the ultimate reception of our contributions entirely problematic. Perhaps there will sooner or later be no recipients. Besides, can we really convince ourselves that what gives our lives value in the long run is merely what our human posterity will derive from it? A God who is strictly immortal and who cherishes all creatures and loves them more adequately than they can love themselves or one another is a definite solution to the problem as just formulated.” [H, CAP; 278-9]

91. “God, I hold, is an artist fostering and loving the beauty of the creatures, the harmonies and intensities of their experiences, as data for his own…. The aesthetic value of good will, of aiming at the general aesthetic good, is in God ideally complete…. What is not and could not be complete,… is the aesthetic value of God’s enjoying the actual aesthetic good of the creatures. For this enjoyment can reach no final maximum, but is endlessly capable of increase…. Moral value is realized in adopting aims for the future that transcend personal advantage. Life is enjoyed as it is lived; but its eventual worth will consist in the contribution it has made to something more enduring than any animal, or than any species of animal. The final beauty is the ‘beauty of holiness’.” [H, CSPM; 310, 321]

92. “(P)olitical economy has its formula of redemption, too. It is this: Intelligence in the service of greed ensures the justest prices, the fairest contracts, the most enlightened conduct of all the
deals between men, and leads to the *sumnum bonum*, food in plenty and perfect comfort. Food for whom? Why, for the greedy master of intelligence. I do not mean to say that this is one of the legitimate conclusions of political economy, the scientific character of which I fully acknowledge. But the study of doctrines, themselves true, will often temporarily encourage generalizations extremely false, as the study of physics has encouraged necessitarianism. What I say, then, is that the great attention paid to economical questions during our century has induced an exaggeration of the beneficial effects of greed and of the unfortunate results of sentiment, until there has resulted a philosophy that comes unwittingly to this, that greed is the great agent in the elevation of the human race and in the evolution of the universe.” [P, EL; 239-40]

**AQ. Open versus closed society/ethics/religion**—Traditional systems of morality often present a detailed and purportedly timeless set of rules of conduct, frequently as prohibitions of evil behavior, when ethics should emphasize our duty to fashion new modes of value appropriate to evolving circumstances. [W, H, B] There is a natural history of religion and morality, related to what today is called sociobiology. There are two great organizing principles in the animal kingdom of instinct and intelligence. Bees and ants exemplify the former, and human beings the latter, but while intelligence allows human beings to escape from the rigidity of an insect colony, it threatens us with social disintegration from egoism and personal disintegration from fear about our mortality. The solution that appeared long ago in human history was an intermingling of our lives with spirits (phantoms, shadows, or elves), then ancestor worship, then recognition of full deities with distinctive personalities and functions. The spirit order increased social cohesion and brought reassurance about life after death, but early religions and moral codes typically carried a sense of hostility toward people outside the fold. The solution to this second, on-going challenge to human society comes through cultural revolutionaries or geniuses, who enlarge our vision and sense of justice beyond its initial tribalism, racism, or nationalism and lead us to an open religion and ethics. However, contemporary religions are mixtures of universal love with retrograde aspects of exclusion, bigotry and hatred. Our great social task is to counteract closed religion and ethics, along with the militarism, subjection of women, and environmental degradation that they foster. [B, J, H, G]

93. “Moral codes have suffered from the exaggerated claims made for them. The dogmatic fallacy here has done its worst. Each such code has been put out by a God on a mountain top, or by a Saint in a cave, or by a divine Despot on a throne, or, at the lowest, by ancestors with a wisdom beyond later question. In any case, each code is incapable of improvement; and unfortunately in details they fail to agree either with each other or with our existing moral intuitions. The result is that the world is shocked, or amused, by the sight of saintly old people hindering in the name of morality the removal of obvious brutalities from a legal system…. The details of these codes are relative to the social circumstances of the immediate environment…. (T)he notion that there are certain regulative notions, sufficiently precise to prescribe details of conduct, for all reasonable beings on Earth, in every planet, and in every star-system, is at once to be put aside…. But what these codes do witness to, and what their interpretation by seers of various races throughout history does witness to, is the aim at a social perfection. Such a realized fact is conceived as an abiding perfection in the nature of things, a treasure for all ages. It is not a romance of thought, it is a fact of Nature. For example, in one sense the Roman Republic declined and fell; in another sense, it stands a stubborn fact in the Universe. To perish is to assume a new function in the process of generation. Devotion to the Republic magnified the type of personal satisfactions for
those who conformed their purposes to its maintenance. Such conformation of purpose beyond personal limitations is the conception of that Peace with which the wise man can face his fate, master of his soul.” [W, AI; 290-291]

94. “One of the results of our analysis has been to draw a sharp distinction in the sphere of society, between the closed and the open. The closed society is that whose members hold together, caring nothing for the rest of humanity, on the alert for attack or defence, bound, in fact, to a perpetual readiness for battle. Such is human society fresh from the hands of nature. Man was made for this society, as the ant was made for the ant-heaps. We must not overdo the analogy; we should note, however, that the hymenopterous communities are at the end of one of the two principal lines of animal evolution, just as human societies are at the end of the other, and that they are in this sense counterparts of one another. True, the first are stereotyped, whereas the others vary; the former obey instinct, the latter intelligence. But if nature, and for the very reason that she has made us intelligent, has left us to some extent with freedom of choice in our type of social organization, she has at all events ordained that we should live in society…. (A) closed society can live… only through a religion born of the myth-making function…. Never shall we pass from the closed society to the open society, from the city to humanity, by any mere broadening out. The two things are not of the same essence. The open society is the society, which is deemed in principle to embrace all humanity. A dream dreamt, now and again, by chosen souls…. We find it, just the same, when we pass from religion to morality. There is a static morality, which exists, as a fact, at a given moment in a given society; it has become ingrained in customs, ideas, and institutions; its obligatory character is to be traced to nature’s demand for a life in common. There is, on the other hand, a dynamic morality which is impetus, and which is related to life in general, creative of nature which created the social demand. The first obligation, in so far as it is a pressure, is infra-rational. The second, in so far as it is aspiration, is supra-rational…. (B)etween the first morality and the second, lies the whole distance between repose and movement. The first is supposed to be immutable. If it changes, it immediately forgets that it has changed, or it acknowledges no change. The shape it assumes at any given time claims to be the final shape. But the second is a forward thrust, a demand for movement; it is the very essence of mobility…. Look at it how you will, you must always come back to the conception of moral creators who see in their mind’s eye a new social atmosphere, an environment in which life would be more worth living. I mean a society such that, if men once tried it, they would refuse to go back to the old state of things. Thus only is moral progress to be defined; but it is only in retrospect that it can be defined, when some exceptional moral nature has created a new feeling, like a new kind of music, and passed it on to mankind, stamping it with his own vitality. Think in this way of ‘liberty,’ of ‘equality,’ of ‘the sanctity of the individual,’ and you will see that you have here no mere difference of degree, but a radical difference of nature between the two ideas of justice which we have distinguished, the one closed, the other open…. It is easy, then, to understand that humanity should have arrived at democracy as a later development…. Of all political systems, it is indeed the furthest removed from nature, the only one to transcend, at least in intention, the conditions of the ‘closed society.’…. (D)emocracy is evangelical in essence and…. its motive power is love…. The formula of non-democratic society, wishing its motto to tally, word for word, with that of democracy, would be ‘authority, hierarchy, immobility.’…. Now, we have pointed to certain features of natural society…. Self-centeredness, cohesion, hierarchy, absolute authority of the chief, all this means discipline, the war spirit…. Even if the League of Nations had at its disposal a seemingly adequate armed force... it would come up
against the deep-rooted war-instinct underlying civilization…. (N)o single one of these difficulties is insurmountable, if an adequate portion of humanity is determined to surmount them. But we must face up to them, and realize what has to be given up if war is to be abolished…. M. Ernest Seilliere shows how national ambitions claim for themselves divine missions: ‘imperialism’ naturally becomes ‘mysticism’…. a counterfeit of true mysticism, the mysticism of ‘dynamic religion’…. the feeling which certain souls have that they are the instruments of God who loves all men with an equal love, and who bids them to love each other. [B, TSMR; 266-269, 58, 80, 281-4, 290, 310-311]

95. “The war against war is going to be no holiday excursion or camping party. The military feelings are too deeply grounded to abdicate their place among our ideals until better substitutes are offered…. The war party is assuredly right in affirming and reaffirming that the martial virtues, although originally gained by the race through war, are absolute and permanent human goods. Patriotic pride and ambition in their military form are, after all, only specifications of a more general competitive passion. They are its first form, but that is no reason for supposing them to be its last form…. (T)hat so many men, by mere accidents of birth and opportunity, should have a life of nothing else but toil and pain and hardness… while others natively no more deserving never get any taste of this… is capable of arousing indignation in reflective minds…. If now---and this is my idea---there were, instead of military conscription a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against Nature, the injustice would tend to be evened out…. Such a conscription…would preserve in the midst of a pacific civilization the manly virtues which the military party is so afraid of seeing disappear in peace. We should get toughness without callousness, authority with as little criminal cruelty as possible, and painful work done cheerily because the duty is temporary…. So far, war has been the only force that can discipline a whole community, and until an equivalent discipline is organized, I believe that war must have its way. But… the ordinary prides and shames of social man, once developed to a certain intensity, are capable of organizing such a moral equivalent as I have sketched, or some other just as effective for preserving manliness of type. [J---MEW; 660-1, 668-670]
AR. Love—As preceding quotes have suggested, love is not merely an emotion but literally to be identified with the nature of God, the glue of the universe, the heart of morality, and the force of cosmic evolution.

96. “God is love, and the object of love: herein lies the whole contribution of mysticism…. (D)ivine love is not a thing of God: it is God Himself…. (T)he love in which the mystics see the very essence of divinity can be both a person and a creative power…. (T)he mystics unanimously bear witness that God needs us, just as we need God. Why should He need us unless it be to love us? And it is to this very conclusion that the philosopher who holds to the mystical experience must come. Creation will appear to him as God undertaking to create creators, that He may have, besides Himself, beings worthy of His love.” [B, TSMR; 254-255]

97. “(T)he law of love is not the rule of angry and bullying insistence….A religious organization is a somewhat idle affair unless it be sworn in as a regiment of that great army that takes life in hand, with all its delights, in grimmest fight to put down the principle of self-seeking, and to make the principle of love triumphant….Fall into the ranks then; follow your colonel. Keep your one purpose steadily and alone in view, and you may promise yourself the attainment of your sole desire, which is to hasten the chariot wheels of redeeming love!” [P, WICF; 356-7]

98. “When the Western world accepted Christianity, Caesar conquered…. The brief Galilean vision of humility flickered throughout the ages, uncertainly…. But the deeper idolatry, of the fashioning of God in the image of the Egyptian, Persian, and Roman imperial rulers, was retained. The Church gave unto God the attributes which belong exclusively to Caesar…. There is, however, in the Galilean origin of Christianity yet another suggestion…. It does not emphasize the ruling Caesar, or the ruthless moralist, or the unmoved mover. It dwells upon the tender elements in the world, which slowly and in quietness operate by love; and it finds its purpose in the present immediacy of a kingdom not of this world. Love neither rules, nor is it unmoved, also it is a little oblivious as to morals. It does not look to the future; for it finds its own reward in the immediate present.” [W, PR; 342-3]

99. “‘Love thy neighbor as thyself,’ I take this ideal to contradict the idea that altruism must be derived from enlightened self-interest. If we love others for their usefulness to ourselves, then we should equally love ourselves for our usefulness to others. It is the good, wherever it is or can be, that concerns us as truly rational or truly religious.” [H, CAP; 222]

100. “To be relative is to take other things into account, to allow them to make a difference to oneself, in some sense to care about them. What else, then, can the ancient saying, deus est caritas, imply if not the supremacy of relativity? Yet nearly two thousand years have been partly wasted in the effort to make this deepest truth connote its opposite, the supremacy of absoluteness, i.e., of indifference to others. And so we have the shameful situation of communists preaching devotion to a super-individual goal, while Christians generally fail to reach any clear alternative to an ethics of enlightened self-interest. (Buddhists in some respects did better at this point.) It is the Christians, and the heirs of the Christian ethics, who ought logically to find this alternative. It is time philosophers gave them some assistance. A metaphysics of love, that is, of socially structured, and thus relative, creative experience is what we need, whether in ethics, religion, or politics – and indeed, in all our basic concerns.” [H, CSMTP; 55-56]
101. “If God is the universally prehending Reality,… God is also the universally prehended Reality. The universal subject is also the universal object of experiencing. To prehend at all includes prehending deity. However,… universally prehended does not entail universally known. All subjects feel God, but only some subjects think or know God. Why must God be universal datum?... (I)f God is to act upon all, influence all, God must become datum for all. Divine decisions could do nothing to creatures who did not prehend those decisions. Whitehead picturesquely intimates this remarkable doctrine by the blunt statement: ‘The power of God is the worship he inspires.’ Both Plato and Aristotle had partly similar ideas of the divine ‘persuasion,’ and Whitehead learned from them. For this philosophical theologian, God does not coerce, bully, or bribe the creatures. Rather the beauty of the divine love intentionally charms them all into responding (however imperfectly) and derives further value from the responses.... There has never been a philosophical theology that so clearly and directly embodied the biblical saying, God is Love.” [H, CAP; 112]

102. “Philosophy, when just escaping from its golden pupa-skin, mythology, proclaimed the great evolutionary agency of the universe to be Love. Or, since this pirate lingo, English, is poor in suchlike words, let us say Éros, the exuberance-love. Afterwards, Empedocles set up passionate-love and hate as the two coordinate powers of the universe…. (A)s darkness is merely the defect of light, so hatred and evil are mere imperfect stages of agape and agathon, love and loveliness…. (T)he love that God is, is not a love of which hatred is the contrary; otherwise, Satan would be a coordinate power; but it is a love which embraces hatred as an imperfect stage of it, an Anteros…. Henry James, the Swedenborgian, says: ‘It is no doubt very tolerable finite or creaturely love to love one’s own in another, to love another for his conformity to one’s self; but nothing can be in more flagrant contrast with the creative Love, all whose tenderness ex vi termini must be reserved only for what intrinsically is most bitterly hostile and negative to itself.’… The movement of love is circular, at one and the same impulse projecting creations into independency and drawing them into harmony. This seems complicated when stated so, but it is fully summed up in the simple formula we call the Golden Rule…. (T)he statement of St. John is the formula of an evolutionary philosophy, which teaches that growth comes only from love, from—I will not say self-sacrifice, but from the ardent impulse to fulfill another’s highest impulse…. (T)his is the way mind develops; and as for the cosmos, only so far as it yet is mind, and so has life, is it capable of further evolution. Love, recognizing germs of loveliness in the hateful, gradually warms it into life, and makes it lovely.” [P, EL; 237-9]

**AS. Peace**---For the individual, there is a quality of civilized life, broader than love or tenderness, without which even a cultured or principled life can be cruel and ruthless. While human beings may [J, B, P, G] or may not [W, H] enjoy after death ‘subjective immortality’ or additional new experiences as the same on-going personality, the experiences of all sub-divine individuals will have ‘objective immortality’ after death in being treasured as much as possible forever in God’s everlasting memory, which can bring a sense of peace or a touch of ‘heaven’ to current feelings.

103. The consequent nature of God is his judgment on the world. He saves the world as it passes into the immediacy of his own life. It is the judgment of a tenderness which loses nothing that can be saved. It is also the judgment of a wisdom which uses what in the temporal world is mere wreckage…. God’s role is not the combat of productive force with productive force, of
destructive force with destructive force; it lies in the patient operation of the overpowering rationality of his conceptual harmonization. He does not create the world, he saves it: or, more accurately, he is the poet of the world, with tender patience leading it by his vision of truth, beauty, and goodness. The vicious separation of the flux from the permanence leads to the concept of an entirely static God, with eminent reality, in relation to an entirely fluent world, with deficient reality…. The consequent nature of God is the fluent world become ‘everlasting’ by its objective immortality in God. Also, the objective immortality of actual occasions requires the primordial permanence of God, whereby the creative advance ever re-establishes itself endowed with initial subjective aims derived from the relevance of God to the evolving world…. In this way, God is completed by the individual, fluent satisfactions of finite fact, and the temporal occasions are completed by their everlasting union with their transformed selves, purged into conformation with the eternal order which is the final absolute ‘wisdom.’…. Neither God, nor the World, reaches static completion. Both are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty…. (T)he kingdom of heaven is with us today…. What is done in the world is transformed into a reality in heaven, and the reality in heaven passes back into the world. By reason of this reciprocal relation, the love in the world passes into the love in heaven, and floods back again into the world. In this sense, God is the great companion---the fellow-sufferer who understands.” [W, PR; 346-351]

104. “I choose the term ‘Peace’ for that Harmony of Harmonies which calms destructive turbulence and completes civilization. Thus a society is to be termed civilized whose members participate in the five qualities---Truth, Beauty, Adventure, Art, Peace…. The Peace that is meant here is not the negative conception of anaesthesia. It is a positive feeling which crowns the ‘life and motion’ of the soul…. It is not a hope for the future, nor is it an interest in present details. It is a broadening of feeling due to the emergence of some deep metaphysical insight, unverbalized and yet momentous in its coordination of values. Its first effect is the removal of the stress of acquisitive feeling arising from the soul’s preoccupation with itself. Thus peace carries with it a surpassing of personality. There is an inversion of relative values. It is primarily a trust in the efficacy of Beauty…. The experience of Peace is largely beyond the control of purpose. It comes as a gift. The deliberate aim at Peace very easily passes into its bastard substitute, Anaesthesia. In other words, in the place of a quality of ‘life and motion’, there is substituted their destruction. Thus Peace is the removal of inhibition and not its introduction…. Peace is the understanding of tragedy, and at the same time its preservation…. Decay, Transition, Loss, Displacement belong to the essence of the Creative Advance…. As soon as high consciousness is reached, the enjoyment of existence is entwined with pain, frustration, loss, tragedy. Amid the passing of so much beauty, so much heroism, so much daring. Peace is then the intuition of permanence…. (I)t sees the tragedy as a living agent persuading the world to aim at fineness beyond the faded level of surrounding fact. Each tragedy is the disclosure of an ideal:---What might have been, and was not: What can be. The tragedy was not in vain…. The inner feeling belonging to this grasp of the service of tragedy is Peace---the purification of the emotions…. The deepest definition of Youth is, Life as yet untouched by tragedy…. Youth is too chequered to be termed a happy period. It is vivid rather than happy…. At the heart of the nature of things, there are always the dream of youth and the harvest of tragedy. The Adventure of the Universe starts with the dream and reaps tragic Beauty. This is the secret of the union of Zest with Peace:---That the suffering attains its end in a Harmony of Harmonies. The immediate experience of this Final Fact, with its union of
Youth and Tragedy, is the sense of Peace. In this way the World receives its persuasion towards such perfections as are possible for its diverse individual occasions.” [W, AI; 285-287, 296]

[P] at the U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey & [W] at Harvard [B], soon victim of a closed society

Some Further Readings


