

the observer and free-will, the mysteries surrounding quantum collapse and determinism would be resolved.

This collection is another step toward bringing process philosophy closer to central issues in the philosophy of physics, but it's only a step. Before process philosophy can mount a convincing case that an ontology of events truly elucidates key scientific concepts, it needs a systematic and comprehensive demonstration of how this kind of metaphysics will dissipate the mysterious and paradoxical behavior of nature in a wide variety of both quantum and relativistic phenomena adequately predicted by contemporary theories.

ROLAND FABER, *Gott als Poet der Welt: Anliegen und Perspektiven der Prozesstheologie*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliches Buchgesellschaft, 2003: 319 pages. [Reviewed by Catherine Keller, Drew University.]

More than any single work I know, this breathtaking opus of a young Viennese theologian embodies the immense theoretical potentiality still energizing process theology at the start of its second century. *God as Poet of the World* is simultaneously a full archeology of process thought and an embracing, indeed systematic, construction (or reconstruction in Griffin's sense) of theology itself. Perhaps its peculiar virtuosity could only be a work of the century *after*, when the movement has passed the test of time, spread through space, and acquired an appetite for edgy Continental questions. I regret that it is not yet translated, leaving much of its audience to rely on hearsay rather than risk the rigors of Roland Faber's Whiteheadianized German. But if its scholarship is formidable, this is not a work of forbidding, Kant-mimicking pedantry—but of profound, theologically adventurous and mystically-tinged creativity.

Suitably, its interpretation of the relation of “creativity” and “God” comprises its most innovative gesture. Faber explicates Whitehead's metaphor of *God the poet* as code for the alternative idea of divine power (the God who “does not create but saves”), reframing but not replacing the doctrine of creation with soteriology. Simultaneously he finds the trope key to a corresponding method for theology: *theo-poetics*. Thus the (still) radical doctrine of a God whose power consists in poetic *eros* rather than unilateral force resists the *compelling* arguments of any orthodoxy. The affirmations of a relational theology take place at the boundary of language, where “negative and positive theology flow into one another” (251). This boundary marks the “theo-poetic *Differenz*” (displacing Heidegger's “ontological *Differenz*”), as the difference between God and creativity—a difference that unfolds in relation to the medieval mystical distinction of God and Godhead, as well as to the *differance* of deconstruction. At this boundary, Faber lures process theology into confluence with the poststructuralist currents of continental philosophy. Without dissolving into constructivist *relativism*, his theo-poetics effects a third space, the “*relational truth*” of a process poststructuralism (295).

The conceptual force and difficulty of Faber's contribution lies in the way the theo-poetic difference is read as at the same time “non-difference;” in other words, as an active *self-differentiation* of God from the “divine matrix” of creativity” (Bracken). From this creativity, as he reads Whitehead's late “Immortality,” arises both God and world—different only in their non-*difference*. This is not a dialectic

tics of incomprehensible paradox but rather a stringent conceptualization of the theo poetic difference as the creative process of *self*-differentiation (with Rahner 247)—primordially that of God, and conversely that of the world—rather than the separation of two substances. God, as radically relational alterity, knows no opposite (“*Gott kennt keine Gegenüber*” 249). Faber articulates an untranslatable “*In/Differenz Gottes*” as the primordial ground of creativity: thus God, as anything but indifferent, appears “not beyond all differences but only *in* difference”—as creative love. The interplay of an ecologically grounded divine difference with a deconstructively ungrounded *differance* generates a certain suspense—released in *Gott als Poet* only eschatologically. God is never substantially “present” but always erotically “insistent” (in the sense of Deleuze’s “*insistence*” vs. “*existence*”) (244ff; 256).

The eschatological “mysterium” reveals itself rhythmically in the grand scale of this work, as it cycles through its multi-layered—always aesthetic, ethical, soteriological—argument (250). As befits a Viennese composition, *Gott als Poet* is actually more symphonic in structure than poetic. Faber’s own voice embeds itself in a stunning width of process intertextuality. It opens with the unique choral device of “Voices”—fourteen brief answers (including Cobb, Griffin, Ford, Kapachilly, Nobuhara) commissioned to the question, “what is process theology?” The book then manages in six movements (not unlike Mahler’s 3rd) to contextualize the emergence of process theology from its complex North American rhizome (“*Gestalten*”), to lay out the theoretical tensions that determine its questions (“*Grundlagen*,”) to trace the sites of its Godtalk (“*Kontakte*”), to parse its God-world relations (“*Horizonte*,”) to construct a postmodern Christian doctrine—or theo poetics—of God, and finally to explore the implications (“*Grenzgänge*”) of such a relational theology for its practices.

The constructive contribution of the last three movements issues from a meditation on the dipolarity of panentheism/monotheism, reflected then in immanence/ transcendence, to an iterative series of *triadic* motifs, by which the relational character of *Gott als Poet* articulates not just its trinitarian tradition but the third space of the divine matrix, or “primordial superject of creativity.” Faber activates Whitehead’s triplet of the primordial, consequent, and superjective natures in order to argue that while God is not creator according to the convention of onto-theological omnipotence, God as/in the theo poetic event is indeed creator, as agent of the relational *poiesis*, the “intercreativity” (192). In the translation of substantial into relational categories, the creation of and through an “incarnational world” (Suchocki) enables Faber to sustain a concretely Christological trinitarianism (223). Indeed, it is echoed in his triadic character as dogmatic theology *vis-à-vis* history, negative theology *vis-a-vis* eschatology and ecological theology *vis-à-vis* its whole (296).

As superject of a soteriology rather than subject of a dominology, as artist rather than a ruler, wisdom rather than objectivity, God embodies and guides a creative process bubbling with the freedom of “the chaotic matrix.” Here Faber wrestles dialectically with the question of the *creatio ex nihilo*, embracing process deconstructions of the dogma’s implicit omnipotence and corresponding imperialism (Griffin, Keller). He manages also, oddly, and not uncharacteristically, to tender an apologia for the *ex nihilo*, read as ground, not of dominance,

but of absolute novelty. A Jesuitical compromise with orthodoxy, bespeaking his scholarly context? Or a style of respectful self-differentiation and perversely Whiteheadian “contrast”? Faber’s third space of God as theopoetic creator “insistently” articulates alterity *as* relationality: in this, again, the vision mirrors the method of a poststructuralist but also “postconstructivist” process relationalism, able to engage orthodoxy while *in truth* resisting its unilateralisms (250;294).

The audience for this book will include European and continentally-oriented scholars who know enough about process to be skeptical but curious: this is an interaction waiting to happen, as deconstruction runs out of its own anti-metaphysical fuel. Younger scholars in philosophy, religion, and theology increasingly evince unrest with the facile oppositions of the late twentieth century academy. In this Faber takes to a new level the conversation which, in *Process and Difference* (Ed. Keller and Daniell) he helped to initiate, and for which *Prozesstheologie* (Mainz 2000), his *Habilitationsschrift*, and numerous essays since form the magisterial presupposition. But his audience will consist primarily of process scholars who will benefit from this extraordinary feat of creative scholarship. Guided by the driving motifs of process theology, he effortlessly, without distracting detours, bridges the philosophical gulf between poststructuralist negativity and the affirmations of an organic cosmology. Faber’s revelation of a “relational truth” (#42) revels in the polyvocal evolution of perspectives as a sign not of indifferent randomness but—in language that will in fact repel the more predictable styles of deconstruction—of the “universal relationality of the cosmos.” This ‘concrete universal’ supports not a “foundationalist norm of the general, in which the structural, the order and the (always and everywhere) valid is sought” but rather the “universality of the unique” (*des Einmaligen*—294). Thus by way of the singular, the unrepeatable—as the *universal* character of the cosmos—Faber welcomes such generative notions as the *chora*, or chaotic matrix, of Derrida and Kristeva and the metaphysical “alterity” of Levinas. Grafting poststructuralism onto the Whiteheadian trunk, he simultaneously maps (or “graphts” if I may be forgiven Derrida’s pun) the entire process project onto the poststructuralist deconstruction of onto-theology.

Ultimately, the importance of Faber’s work registers—both despite and because of its discursive complexity—as the fierce freshness of its impact. If process thought threatens to become a bit too predictable, too deductive, too re-re-constructive for its own community, a “*mysterium*” pulses with excitement through *God as Poet*. Faber’s process poststructuralism unfolds at the edge of his negative theology, drawn less from the current continental fascination with apophatics than from the tradition of Eckhart and Cusa that has long inspired his theopoetics. He hints at the eco-social practices, the sophic feminism, the “civilizational ethic” that embody his “transformative spirituality” and its “divine ecology.” One wants him to risk more articulation of the theopolitics implicit in his theopoetics. Perhaps this is an awkwardly parochial, rather American, desire. Yet it would not be a matter of vulgarizing the vision, of aping a praxis better outlined by other talents—but of intentionally transcending power: of pointing theory toward its own work in the world. Faber’s brilliant theopoetics escapes at once from the forced-field of orthodoxy (even in its process variety) and from the entropy of elite relativism. Nonetheless he partakes, with theopoetic tenderness,

of elements of both. In this difficult border-zone—between the claims of a time-less truth and of a time of untruth-- grows the hope not just of process theology but, I suspect, of any ethically and intellectually credible Christianity.

FRANZ G. RIFFERT and MICHEL WEBER, eds, *Searching for New Contrasts: Whiteheadian Contributions to Contemporary Challenges in Neurophysiology, Psychology, Psychotherapy and the Philosophy of Mind*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003: 444 pages. [Reviewed by John H. Buchanan, Helios Foundation, Atlanta, GA 30324]

Whitehead's speculative philosophy holds tremendous implications for the field of psychology in such areas as metapsychology, mind-body relations, perception, memory, and the nature of conscious and unconscious experience, to name only a few of the more obvious. *Process and Reality* alone contains a veritable treasure-trove of psychologically oriented ideas, insights, and theories just waiting to be developed. Considering these rich possibilities, the interconnections between Whitehead's thought and psychology have been relatively unexploited. Michel Weber and Franz Riffert's edited collection of essays in *process psychology* signal that a significant shift is underway.

In their foreword to *Searching for New Contrasts*, Weber and Riffert outline their broader vision for interfacing psychology and process philosophy. This undertaking is organized under the auspices of the Whitehead Psychology Nexus, which includes conferences and research workshops, as well as publishing. *Searching for New Contrasts* is the first in a three-volume work intended to "encourage psychology in a Whiteheadian atmosphere and Whiteheadian scholarship informed by psychology" (7). The second and third volumes are entitled *Primary Glimmerings: Consciousness Studies from a Whiteheadian Process Perspective* and *The Roar of Awakening: A Whiteheadian Dialogue between Western Psychotherapies and Eastern Worldviews*. Weber and Riffert are quick to point out that their original goal of a "programmatic argument of the 'manifesto' type" for process psychology proved beyond the scope of this book (10), which is understandable for such a varied collection of essays by independent authors. Hopefully, such a full articulation of "first principles" remains a vision for the future; meanwhile, *Searching for New Contrasts* offers a vital exploration of the multitude of fruitful exchanges that are possible between psychology and process thought. Perhaps the most exciting revelation is that there is this level of active scholarship and interest in process psychology. It is encouraging indeed to see the number of scholars around the world that are pursuing this line of thought, as is quickly revealed by the list of contributors (Italy, France, Austria, England, Belgium, Israel, Australia, Canada, United States).

Following the brief foreword and list of contributors, *Searching for New Contrasts's* opening section concludes with an excellent introduction by John Cobb and Riffert. In "Reconnecting Science and Metaphysics," these authors contextualize process psychology through an overview of the relationship between modern science and philosophy, a brief history of process psychology as it emerged out of Whitehead's metaphysics, and a realistic appraisal of where process psychology stands today. The remaining nineteen essays are divided into four parts: neurophysiology, psychology, psychotherapy, and philosophy of mind. The style and content of this collection of essays ranges widely, from quite