

Introduction

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I. SYSTEM: A NEW LOOK

System is a distinctive feature of Western thought. Whether lovingly sought after, as is the case with the Romantics, or triumphantly found, as is the case with the Absolute Idealists, system since Plato is the goal of Western intellectual striving. Whether in the form of theoretical reason or practical reason, system represents a partial or total comprehension by thought of the reality of particular entities or actions. At the intersection between reason and nature—the “point of indifference,” as Schelling would say—the human being is compelled to think a system classifying the reality that confronts it and that it desires to change.

The categorization of reality in thought is the problem of philosophy that takes its point of departure from the simple fixing of universal concepts of experience. How can similar qualities be predicated of different particulars? How can historical movement be conceptualized by interpretative keys of transhistorical value? The philosophical question relating the many to the one and the philosophical-historical question relating particular events to transhistorical significance are the central questions driving philosophy's preoccupation with reason and reality. The narrative of Western philosophical thought can be told from the perspective of these questions. Reason's *raison d'être* is to classify and deduce, as Plato has Socrates admit to being a “lover of division and collection.”¹ Reason's content is itself supplied by reality: given in intuition, perceived by the senses, felt by the “organic pole.” And the fact that reality can be categorized truly by reason is explained by the necessary relation between the physical and

¹ PLATO, *Phaedrus*, 266b. SCHLEIERMACHER alludes to reason's capacity to divide and collect in *On Religion*, 20 (speech two).

the mental poles; the inevitable categorization of reality presupposes conditions for that precise possibility. Classification proceeds, presupposing relations between spirit and nature and assuming embeddedness in an organized, interrelated system of real objects of experience. The question regarding reason and reality is the question relating system to life.

The lure to system reveals distinctive features playing into system and its construction. Common exigencies are relatively stable for systems of philosophy and of theology throughout the history of their building. Whether representing a cosmology or a religious worldview, a system of thought aims to grasp the whole. System also locates particulars within a whole that is more than their sum total. The conceptualization of this totality and the particulars related to this totality, furthermore, is accompanied by the question regarding the explanation for the existence of the whole. Most philosophical and theological systems make the move from the world's conditioned existence to its ground; the world's existence is explained by its utter dependence on a "Whence" for whose own existence no explanation can be given. Hence the search for, and in some cases even the rational exhaustion of, the Absolute is a constitutive feature of Western systems. It is also the Absolute that usually serves to unite, as is the case with the German Idealists, and to distinguish between, as is the case with the Jena Romantics, philosophical and theological systems. If the Absolute is the transcendently or transcendently conceived ground of the world from "a" philosophical perspective, then its determination as the living God reflects "a" theological perspective. God and world function as co-constituents of "the" system.

Together with the God-world relationship, the individual plays a constitutive role in system. The self/world/God relations characterize the coordinates of Western systems that privilege the human individual at the site of metaphysical questioning. The questions concerning the existence of the whole, the existential processes of particulars and their interrelations are questions that human beings are privileged to ask. In the tradition of Continental Idealism, the human individual represents the point of indifference at which spirit and matter coincide. This is the privileged place, though not to the exclusion of other living beings, at which the question of being is raised. Reality begs to be known, and loved, by individuals, and with the rise of historical consciousness, history itself is raised as the question from the perspective of a being that knows itself to be historically constituted. By posing these questions, the human individual reveals onto-anthropological features that drive to system. The human organism unites reason and perception in harmony, mirroring a world that also in-

tegrates diversity, spans opposites, and unites poles in order to maximize beauty (as Whitehead would say). While God perpetually injects the world with truth, beauty, and goodness, the individual and the world perpetually change in relation to these lures.

Yet it is precisely the reality of the self/world/God relations that poses the disconcerting question concerning its elusiveness to system's grasp. System has its own cultured despisers. Plato's own early dialogues are characterized by Socratic irony, a moment of realization that reality evades complete determination. The Jena Romantics, particularly Schlegel and the early Schleiermacher, resisted the absolute exhaustion of reality by reason on the grounds that finite reason was not capable of transcending its boundaries in order to comprehend its ground; homesickness, not homecoming, captured the mood in the absence of systematic closure. Furthermore, an ethics acknowledging the ineradicable face of the other refuses subsumption into "the" hegemonic I; the categorical imperative of love inscribed on neighbor protests hate-full totalitarianism. And life itself, with its messy experiences of evil and tragedy, calls systematic prettiness into question. Are claims of redemption and love falsified by empirical instances of their opposite? If reality is a thorn in the flesh of system, then language too deals its deck. Recent despisers deconstruct the myth of Western system by showing that language's infinite movement subverts static opposites. A Heraclitean world resists system, in fact makes impossible the task of system-building, because languages, not metaphysical essences, dance to the tune played by local musicians.

There is merit in the criticism of reason's hubristic elevation over reality. System must be called to humble accountability in the face of life that is jagged, wounded, and raw. Life challenges reason to its breaking-point; can experiences of "horrendous evils,"² with their simultaneously shattering and numbing shock effect, be suspended in a meta-narrative that would explain their necessity? Yet reason responds, driven by the desire to answer the "why?" haunting life.

The key theme raised in this volume addresses precisely the accountability of system in the face of life. Whether raised in terms of system's adequacy to empirical data or its applicability to religious pluralism, whether probed in view of the universal's relation to the individual or its embod-

² I borrow the term from MARILYN MCCORD ADAMS, *Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God*, Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

iment in a particular perspective, the key question concerns system's account of the ebb and flow of living experience. By posing the question of system's openness to experiential polyvalence, this volume both agrees with the criticism against the rational homeostasis of systematic stagnation and pleads for a new look at system for both the philosophical and theological disciplines. A rehabilitation of system as a viable genre for conceptual thinking is this volume's response to keep system open on the formal grounds of reason's predilection for classification and division, on the cosmological grounds that the universe is ordered by proportion and harmony, and on the material grounds that the ontological truths of beauty and love will prevail over their empirical falsification.

The contemporary context for system's rehabilitation is admittedly shaped by criticism. Yet the stage for a love of system is also set by the contemporary context stemming from a trajectory of Western Enlightenment philosophy. System is currently being mined for its conceptual gold in fields such as sociology, with the work, for example, of Niklas Luhmann,³ or family systems theory in the study of psychology and religious care and counseling of souls,⁴ with work on organic models of system in the biological⁵ and philosophical-anthropological sciences,⁶ and in philos-

³ See the very important book by NIKLAS LUHMANN, *Social Systems*, trans. John Bednarz, Jr., with Dirk Baecker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

⁴ DOROTHY STROH BECVAR and RAPHAEL J. BECVAR, *Family Therapy: A Systemic Integration*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1993). I thank Martha Taylor for kindly providing this reference.

⁵ The most significant and widely acknowledged recent book on open systems in the biological sciences is HIROAKI KITANO, *Foundations of Systems Biology* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2001). The designation information theory is commonly used in recent work in this area of study; see esp. SUSAN OYAMA, *The Ontogeny of Information: Developmental Systems and Evolution*, 2nd ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000). I thank Philip Clayton for kindly drawing my attention to these texts.

⁶ I thank Stephan Grätzel for kindly providing me with the following references to open systems in biology and philosophical anthropology (personal correspondence, April 8, 2004). LUDWIG VON BERTALANFFY first articulated the concept of open system in the biological sciences in his work, *Theoretische Biologie: Stoffwechsel, Wachstum*, vol. 2, 2nd rev. ed. (Bern: A. Francke, 1951), 50: "Ein offenes System ist ein solches, worin Ein- und Ausfuhr von Materialien stattfindet." Bertalanffy's concept of the fundamental openness of the organism was appropriated by Plessner, who initiated the concept of open systems in philosophical anthropology; see HELMUTH PLESSNER, *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch: Einleitung in die philosophische Anthropologie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1928). Most recently, the philosopher STEPHAN GRÄTZEL uses this idea as a key determination of the human being in his *Utopie und Ekstase: Vernunft-*

ophy, with Nicholas Rescher being an important voice.⁷ Modeling system after the structures and processes of organisms orient's thought to be most attentive to the movement of life itself. The organism is the model of system par excellence, for which the whole is more than the sum of its parts, and in which the parts are individually constituted by their relations to each other and to their movement within the whole. With this direction, modern thinking appropriates the Greek notion of system as an organic interconnected whole. The same organic metaphor pervades Schleiermacher's descriptions of system, while Whitehead provides his term for his life's work: the "philosophy of organism."

A system aligned with organic attentiveness resists a criticism launched against a dominant strand of Enlightenment thought. Spinoza's and the Leibnizian-Wolffian philosophy exemplify the rationalist advocacy for system obedient to the geometric method of deductive logic. These systems were conceived according to the Enlightenment identification of system with science; the ground from which the *more geometrico* sprang was fertilized by the rigorous requirements for scientific presentation. With a mathematical rigidity that constructed a mechanistic universe, the rift between the *res extensa* and the *res cogitans* was opened up. The subsequent post-Kantian Idealist search for a foundational philosophy (*Grundsatzphilosophie*) aimed to close the gap, but ended up adopting the category of ontological necessity as the measure of historical development. It was Romantic melancholy that re-opened the unbridgeable chasm between the finite and the infinite, and it was this mood that set the stage of protest against systematic homeostasis. Schleiermacher's own philosophical system bears witness against the rational exhaustion of nature by reason, and his own theological system radically historicizes the contingent standpoint of subject as well as its object. And Whitehead goes even further by proposing a symbiotic model of a God who changes together with the world. Even the classic metaphysical attributes of immutability characterizing the bedrock of system are called into question by his philosophy of organism.

offenheit in den Humanwissenschaften, Philosophie im Kontext, no. 1 (St. Augustin: Gardez!-Verlag, 1997), 25-6.

⁷ NICHOLAS RESCHER, *Cognitive Systematization: A Systems-Theoretic Approach to a Coherentist Theory of Knowledge* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1979).

II. OPEN SYSTEMS

If current smoke signals on the horizon of some academic disciplines indicate that system is making a come-back, then its rehabilitation for contemporary thought requires a constructive-critical look. This collection of essays represents such a close look at the various formal and material features that play into the concept of system. Conceiving the ingredients of "open systems" is both an experiment in anticipation and an engagement with thinkers from the past who have provided visionary accounts of system. Both Schleiermacher and Whitehead envisaged ways in which systematic thought could better be tailored to suit the results of empirical-scientific and historical research. Both thought through the requirements for systematic thinking, and proposed constructive approaches to system that could be termed "open." The essays in this volume explore the two systems of these thinkers in view of their respective proposed relations between reason and reality. In the process, features are teased out that make system what it is.

One key feature of system held relatively stable since its neo-Platonic conceptualization is its metaphysical commitment. System is the conception of individuals in relation to both a whole, whether understood as *this* world and *the* world (or *this* universe and *the* universe),⁸ and to the ground of that whole. Cosmology lends itself to metaphysical reflection concerning the God-world relation. The tension in Western thought is focused precisely on this relation that has its implications for the "openness" of system. On the one hand, the neo-Platonic model explains the common ontological structures dispersed through diverse particulars by a theory of emanation and a metaphysics of participation connecting all reality with erotic glue. On the other hand, a medieval Christian understanding sees all particulars as ideas in the mind of God that are then actualized *ex nihilo* by divine command. The systems represented by Whitehead and Schleiermacher play with this tension in such a way as to magnify intra-worldly openness to motion, freedom, and life. The respective cosmologies are integrally related to metaphysical claims. Whitehead's cosmology is explicitly built up from the metaphysical structure of the actual occasion. Schleiermacher's cosmology reflects a more tentative metaphysics that is presupposed rather than full-blown. Whether explicit or implicit, both thinkers

⁸ David Ray Griffin specified the Whiteheadian distinction between *this* world / universe and *the* world / universe in a personal correspondence (March 18, 2004).

are similarly committed to working out a God who cannot be conceived without the world.⁹

The second feature is intimately related to the first. Since Kant, no metaphysical claims can innocently avoid epistemological justification. Metaphysics is accountable to the forum of reason. Although Schleiermacher and Whitehead differ on the degree to which speculation is permitted by finite reason, both work out complex theories of perception, thinking, and knowing to give their systems the necessary epistemological rationale. Knowing for both thinkers is given a wide foundation in experience; reality is perceived not only through physical senses but also by intuition and feeling (called "prehension" by Whitehead). Furthermore, the relation between perception in this broad sense and thought is an intimate one. Both thinkers appropriate Leibniz's minimum / maximum continuum between the organic and intellectual pole in order to explain why experience can be categorized by reason at all. The reason for system's potential adequacy to life is given by the monistic epistemological model that itself keeps system open to irritations provided by false schematization and to subsequent testing for the elimination of error. Systemic openness affirms a world that can be experienced in its infinite diversity, so that it can be known.

Metaphysics and epistemology are adjusted to each other by a third feature of system. Criteria must be supplied for any system advocating its truth and truthful relation to reality. Both Schleiermacher and Whitehead keenly recognize the necessity to stipulate criteria. Whitehead stipulates features of system and both rational and empirical criteria for its testing in the opening pages of *Process and Reality*: a system of "speculative philosophy" is "the endeavor to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted," and tests for its truth consist of rational criteria—coherence and logical consistency—as well as of empirical criteria—adequacy and applicability.¹⁰ These criteria lend to Whitehead's system its openness to be tested against the yields of the natural and social sciences, and the entire range of human experience, including moral, religious, and aesthetic experience. Schleiermacher provides two requirements for knowledge in his philosophical text, the *Dialektik*. These requirements, the agreement of

⁹ For Whitehead, God can be conceived apart from this particular world, this particular "cosmic epoch," as David Ray Griffin has clarified in a personal correspondence (March 18, 2004).

¹⁰ PR 3.

thought with being and the identity of the pathway arriving at this agreement,¹¹ presuppose a system modeling the totality of reality in a coherent set of interrelations. In his theological work, Schleiermacher expands upon the features stipulated in the *Dialektik*, adding the criteria of coherence and comprehensiveness¹² and appealing to assertoric and divinatory qualities to test the adequacy of a historically located system of theology to the contemporary state of the church (in his case, the Protestant Christian church).¹³ The question of testing inevitably opens system up to a stance of respect in the face of other areas of life and its investigation. System is not an imposition onto reality but arises in dialogue with it.

The fitting of a system to reality is a process that is never definitively closed. It is also not the privilege of one exclusive standpoint. Open system invites a plurality of constructions. The commitment of this volume is to multiple perspectives. Yet this commitment cannot be interpreted to mean the avoidance or rejection of questions concerning common features, universal claims, or systematic concerns. Perspectival individuality and common identity are not mutually exclusive options. Rather, the affirmation of plural perspectives is integrally joined to the affirmation of a plurality of co-existing systems. And with a number of perspectives, dialogue can take place. The quest for knowledge is truly intersubjective; even the truth of one's individual system can be contested only in a dialogical context.

III. SCHLEIERMACHER AND WHITEHEAD IN DIALOGUE

"Systems in dialogue" is the way that this book stages its theme. As a practice in the intersubjective search for knowledge and truth, dialogue presupposes individual starting-points, an agreement concerning a common subject matter under investigation, and the conditions for the possibility of successful communication and understanding. Dialogue invites the exercise of philosophical and hermeneutical strategies in order to locate sameness and difference.

The dialogical stage is set by Schleiermacher and Whitehead, brought into dialogue by scholars of these respective thinkers. Yet both, who lived

¹¹ DialKGA, 423-5 (*Einführung* 1833, § 5,1)

¹² BO §§ 200-1 (201-2). (Page numbers in parentheses.)

¹³ BO § 202 (102).

almost a century apart, made system their life's métier. Both present, as the authors of the chapters in this volume agree, new options for the construction of system, one in protest against the exhaustive rationalization of reality, the other in acceptance of a worldview shaped by Darwin's and Einstein's discoveries. What it means to have an individual perspective is illustrated by these two different thinkers. What it means to have caught the lure of system, and to have been sufficiently intrigued in order to actualize it, is precisely the focus here. In the dialogue between those who have engaged their thought, the merits of system are teased out in view of the contemporary question regarding the future viability of the systematic genre.

The agreement between Schleiermacher and Whitehead might have to do with respect to their appeals to similar predecessors. Plato and Leibniz tower as giants behind both systems. The love for coherence motivates Schleiermacher and Whitehead to aspire to the creation of a beautiful system, while the love for life drives both to address the relation between the world of becoming, or the truths of fact, and the world of being, or the truths of reason. On the basis of a common philosophical foundation, differences in perspectives can be detected. An adherence to Kantian critical philosophy explains Schleiermacher's resistance to speculation, while a dialogue with Hume and Einstein directs Whitehead to speculation on the processes of actual entities.

Both systems betray common philosophical underpinnings, while the way of moving from philosophy to theology is a significant difference between them. The applicability of Whitehead's system to theology is one to which he gestured in his own major work. A philosophical doctrine of God is a necessary aspect of system, Whitehead argues in working out the primordial and consequent natures of God in relation to world-process. This piece is given explicit theological determination by those process theologians committed to his thought, particularly those included as authors in this volume. Philosophy's fit to theology is not as neat in someone who exemplified them both on their own terms. Schleiermacher strove for distinctive philosophical and theological systems on the basis of what he considered to be distinct fields of study. His philosophical system, on the one hand, carves out reason, its activities, its requirements, goals, and presuppositions for knowledge; the best he can do with the Absolute is to posit a transcendent ground to his system without determining it in any religious way. His theological system, on the other hand, is decisively determined by the historical data teased from the history and state of the Christian

church; his ecumenical Lutheran and Reformed theological program arises from contextualized Christian religion and is written for it.

IV. OPEN SYSTEMS IN DIALOGUE

The concept of this collection of essays is designed to facilitate a dialogue between Schleiermacher scholars and Whitehead scholars on the topic of "open system." There are three subdivisions to the book, each concentrating on distinct features at which the systems of Schleiermacher and Whitehead are mined for their contemporary gold. Represented in each of the three subdivisions is both a "monolingual" Schleiermacherian position and a "monolingual" Whiteheadian position as well as two "bilingual" Schleiermacher and Whitehead protagonists who set the dialogue into play.

The first section, "System and Historical Context," identifies the historical-philosophical trajectories feeding into the ways in which Schleiermacher and Whitehead conceived their respective systems. Questions regarding the features of open systems are addressed in this section by considering philosophers with whom both Schleiermacher and Whitehead were deeply familiar (e.g., Plato, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant) and specific philosophical issues relevant to system-building (e.g., synthetic and analytic judgments). The second section, "System and Categorization," explores key terms in the relation between individual and universal features of system, particularly in view of the relation between these features and their ground. The third section, "System and Contemporary Themes," explores the relevance of open systems in view of issues moving the contemporary imagination.

The keynote essay of this collection is written by Jack C. Verheyden. The essay, "Mapping the Land of Beginning Again," focuses on Schleiermacher's systems of theological and philosophical thought. According to Verheyden, the early Schleiermacher's pitting the "craving of system" against living religion does not preclude the later Schleiermacher from a commitment to the systematic form of academic theology and philosophy. The later theological works aim at a systematic presentation of doctrine that remains open to both the history of a lived religion and to the historical location of any theological articulation. And the philosophical system thematizes the relation of system to being.

The first paper of section one ("System and Historical Context") introduces the central issue at stake in the exploration of the idea of "open sys-

tem." In "Whitehead at Infinite Speed: Deconstructing System as Event," Roland Faber exposes the dual tendencies in the history of Western philosophy between system's "self-confirmation," based on systematic criteria of reason, and system's "self-relativization," based on reality's subversion of system by its constant elusion of rational comprehension. All four types of system in Western philosophy—cosmological, intellectual, axiomatic, and organic systems—as Faber argues, contain both tendencies. Faber situates Whitehead's unique position in this history between Leibniz and Deleuze, showing that Whitehead represents a balance between the desire for system and the drive to keep system open to process, fluency, and history.

Jacqueline Mariña thematizes the relation between system and judgment formation in her paper, "Schleiermacher between Kant and Leibniz: Predication and Ontology." The two historical lens through which Mariña views Schleiermacher are precedents that Mariña contends do not mix well in Schleiermacher's *Dialektik*. On the one hand, the systematic issue of Leibniz's complete concept is related to his theory of predication, which is based on logical relations between singular concepts. On the other hand, the problematization of the analytic/synthetic distinction in the Kant-Eberhard controversy situates Leibniz's complete concept in relation to Kant's two-source theory of knowledge. Kant's theory explains how synthetic judgments are based on receptivity through sense perception of objects given to experience; hence the concept, for Kant, is informed by real relations between predicates and object. A system that is adequate to experience must take, according to Mariña, Kant's synthetic judgments into account.

In her "bilingual" paper, "Relative Freedoms: The Influence of Spinoza on the Systems of Whitehead and Schleiermacher," Krista Duttenhaver undertakes an exploration of both Whitehead and Schleiermacher in view of Spinoza's legacy: the stress on absolute determinacy as a restriction of an indeterminacy that threatens to undermine system. For both Whitehead and Schleiermacher, as Duttenhaver argues, the element of indeterminacy, whether as the evolution of the actual occasion in Whitehead's case, or as the self-formation of the human individual in Schleiermacher's case, contributes significantly to an understanding of the "openness" in their respective systems. By providing more adequate accounts of reality in terms of dynamic creativity and self-causation, in Whitehead's case, and in terms of the relative freedom and dependence of the finite causal nexus that itself is absolutely dependent on God, in Schleiermacher's case, both Whitehead and Schleiermacher posit relative freedom as constitutive of the indetermi-

nate element that is nevertheless integrally related to a determinate specification of system.

Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki's paper, "System without Certainty," chooses to treat the empirical criteria for the critical testing of a system, for Whitehead, adequacy and applicability, in order to make a case for Whitehead's "open" model regarding the God-universe relation. The model's openness consists precisely in the fact that its adequacy to data can be empirically tested by physics, particularly the W-MAP (Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe) explorations. By bringing Whitehead's conception of God and the universe into dialogue with the W-MAP, Suchocki argues that a system tested according to its adequacy to data yielded by science, particularly physics, remains principally open to continued revisions that arise as a result of dialogue between the sciences. Such an open system resists systemically certain closure, preferring the modesty of provisionality.

As the first contribution to section two ("System and Categorization"), Anna Case-Winters' paper, "System and Dynamism in Whitehead's Thought: The Category of the Ultimate and the Concept of God," finds the answer to the question concerning the systematic longing for permanence and the acknowledgement of perpetual novelty in Whitehead's theistic-metaphysical system. It is the concept of God that, for Whitehead, is a metaphysically necessary feature of system, guaranteeing, on the one hand, the everlasting truth of the eternal objects and, on the other hand, grounding openness on the creativity that is constitutive of world process. Whitehead's God-world connection is predicated upon the metaphysical relation between God and the world. Yet as nontemporal, God is the world's metaphysical ground, luring a world in process to truth, beauty, and goodness.

In her paper focusing on the relation between the individual and system, Christine Helmer looks at a term more explicitly associated with Whitehead than with Schleiermacher. Nevertheless, in "Novelty and System in Schleiermacher's Thought," Helmer contends that novelty is constitutive of Schleiermacher's privileging of the individual in view of the post-Kantian problematization of knowing the individual. In Schleiermacher's system, knowledge of the individual presupposes structures of identity, such as ethical processes, structures of reason, and regulative-ontological guarantees for the correspondence between the system of thought and the system of the totality of reality. Although these features are significant, Schleiermacher's emphasis is on the dialectical intersubjective procedure that orients the search for knowledge of the individual to the hermeneutical task of isolating individual novelty from shared features of language. The mu-

tual entailment between individual and identity keeps system "open" to novelty.

The constructive question regarding the openness of Whitehead's system for the articulation of a hermeneutical theory is answered by J. R. Hustwit in his "bilingual" paper, "Open Interpretation: Whitehead and Schleiermacher on Hermeneutics." For Hustwit, a Whiteheadian theory of interpretation is "open" to the interpretative event between authorial intention and the reader occasion because of two levels. Firstly, the metaphysic of the actual occasion's concrescence explains how the selection of specific data makes expression more linguistically precise, but does not diminish the influence of the data's less conscious polyvalence in expression. Secondly, Hustwit shows that the relationship between feeling and language in Whitehead's thought grounds interpretative polyvalence in the eternal objects that serve as the ontological parameters for translateability from authorial intention to interpretation.

In his "bilingual" paper, "Systematizing Agency: Toward a Pantheistic-Participatory Theory of Agency," Philip Clayton focuses on the topic of agency in relation to system. Clayton relaxes the tension he sees between agency that introduces novelty into system and system as a schematization of the whole, by marrying Schleiermacher to Whitehead. Although the finite agent is understood differently by Schleiermacher and Whitehead respectively, both complement each other by conceiving a participatory model of the relation between finite and infinite subject and a pantheistic model that allows for the freedom of finite agents. The reciprocal relation between God and finite agent opens system to the reciprocal activity of both.

Julia A. Lamm sets the constructive emphasis of section three ("System and Contemporary Themes") with her paper, "The Force of Dialogue and a Dialogue of Forces: Resources for Open Theological Systems." In this paper, Lamm identifies resources in Schleiermacher's own thought for a robust and contemporary Christian systematic theology. Particularly Schleiermacher's dialogical dialectic and his metaphysic of nature as a system of dynamic individual forces provide new ways to conceive an open system of theology that is motivated by love, is provisional even as it seeks the truth, and is inherently communicative.

The question concerning the relation of contemporary ethics to systematic thought is the theme of David Ray Griffin's paper. In "Feeling and Morality in Whitehead's System," Griffin analyzes elements of Whitehead's theistic naturalism and worldview in order to defend particular moral fea-

tures that Griffin claims are presupposed in daily life (human freedom, normative values, and ultimate importance) and to argue that the initial aim injected into each unity of the system by God is a universal, metaphysical characteristic of morality. With Whitehead's theistic naturalism, Griffin can explain how an ethical system can be conceived together with a God as an explanation for a universal dimension to ethics, yet this God is one who does not supernaturally intervene in the system in order to actualize an ethical will.

In his "bilingual" paper, "Process and God in Whitehead and Schleiermacher," Eilert Herms provides a comparison between these two thinkers in view of their common rejection of Kant's claim that metaphysics is both impossible and unnecessary. For Herms, both Schleiermacher and Whitehead are committed to working out a theory of being as a theory of the universal conditions of becoming. Furthermore, this theory is pertinent to the central claim of religion: the subject matter of a universal theory of becoming includes the becoming of human persons and the work of God. Thus systematic openness is related to a metaphysical conception of becoming.

The last paper in the volume, by John B. Cobb, Jr., addresses the significant issue of theology and philosophy in relation to religious pluralism. In "Schleiermacher and Whitehead on Religious Pluralism," Cobb sets up two models to account for the plurality of religions. According to Cobb, Schleiermacher (as well as the trajectory influenced by him) determines the essence of religion in general and subsequently uses this determination as a norm by which other religions are evaluated. Whitehead's approach overcomes Schleiermacher's restriction to the Abrahamic religious traditions by providing a number of definitions of religion, such as "the cultivation of the inner life," that succeed, according to Cobb, in both describing many forms of religious life and in encouraging their respective pursuits of goals. Whitehead's model is characterized by its openness to the contemporary reality of religious pluralism that includes both theistic and non-theistic religious, and also political and social expressions.