

## 5<sup>th</sup> European Summer School in Process Thought

### Aesthetics and Process Philosophy

August 6–10, 2018

The Faculty of Arts of the University of South Bohemia is proud to be hosting the 5<sup>th</sup> ESSPT, which will be devoted to a wide range of aesthetic themes and problems considered from the point of view of Process thought.

Alfred North Whitehead, whose philosophical oeuvre is considered to be a basic source of process philosophy, did not publish any book or article strictly on aesthetics, and therefore no Whitehead's aesthetic theory exists concerning the nature of aesthetic experience, aesthetic attitude, aesthetic object, ontological character of works of art and other key aesthetic problems. Nevertheless, Whitehead did not overlook the significance of aesthetic problems. He refers to aesthetic terms and problems in key moments of his philosophical books. In *Process and Reality*, for example, he wrote that "an actual fact is a fact of aesthetic experience" (PR, 1978, p. 280) in *Adventures of Ideas*, he stated that "the teleology of the Universe is directed to the production of Beauty" (AI, 1967, p. 265), and in his "Remarks" (Remarks, Alfred North Whitehead, *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Mar., 1937), pp. 178-186) he even says that "our enjoyments of the values of human art, or of natural beauty, our horror at the obvious vulgarities and defacements which force themselves upon us – all these modes of experience are sufficiently abstracted to be relatively obvious. And yet evidently they disclose the very meaning of things" and suggests that the most fruitful starting point of philosophical thought is "that section of value-theory which we term aesthetics" (Remarks, 1937, p. 184–85). Throughout Whitehead's philosophical writings, there are a lot of statements, which emphasise the relevance of aesthetics and its key notions to philosophical thought. We could conclude from these remarks, that, for Whitehead, the aesthetic experience was the key to construing his process metaphysics. Although he does not formulate a concise aesthetic theory, his aesthetics is, in a way, immanent in his metaphysical system. One of the aims of the 5th European Summer School is, therefore the consideration of the role that aesthetic concepts play in Whitehead's philosophical system and the determination of their precise meaning.

Whitehead uses aesthetic notions in a very broad sense and they are related to any "occasion" in the world; hence, these concepts are related to inanimate

entities and even to physical entities, such as electrons. In *Religion in the Making*, he even says, that “physical quantities are aggregates of physical vibrations, and physical vibrations are the expression among abstraction of physical science of the fundamental principle of aesthetic experience” (RM, 1927, s. 102). Thus, for Whitehead, the concepts are defined in much broader contexts than traditional aesthetics does. This is the first level of inquiry.

Whitehead did not explicitly and systematically solve the problems of aesthetics in the narrower sense, that concerns only human experience and concentrates on such problems as the relation of practical, theoretical and aesthetic modes of experience, the ontological status of works of art, the differences and the similarities of aesthetic appreciation of art and nature, the differences and similarities of different art forms, the problem of adequate and inadequate interpretation of a work of art and many other aesthetic themes. The second level of considerations of the Summer School will consist in outlining Whiteheadian aesthetics in the narrower sense.

The third basic level of research of the Summer School will consist in the analysis of the aesthetic consideration of other philosophers, who either share with Whitehead his emphasis on process (Samuel Alexander, John Dewey, William James, Bertrand Morris, Henri Bergson, etc.) or were directly influenced by him (Charles Hartshorne, Susanne Langer, Donald Sherburne, Mary Alice Wyman and others).

We welcome papers, which not only directly consider one of the mentioned levels, but all presentations analysing aesthetic experience and works of art from the standpoint of process philosophy.

The event format combines introductory lectures, moderated discussions and seminar units. Five main lectures as well as fifteen call-for-papers presentations are planned. The presentations should not exceed 30 minutes and will be followed by 10 – 20 minutes for questions and discussion. **Invited speakers:** Maria Teresa Teixeira (University of Coimbra, Portugal), Helmut Maaßen (University of Düsseldorf, Germany), Michel Weber, (Center Chromatikon, Brussels), Miloš Ševčík (Charles University, Prague). Other scholars are contacted.

#### **BASIC DATA:**

**Organiser:** Faculty of Arts, University of South Bohemia (Martin Kaplický); European Society for Process Thought (Helmut Maassen)

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**When:** 6. – 10. 8. 2018

**Where:**

Filozofická fakulta Jihočeské univerzity v Českých Budějovicích

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**Abstract Submission Deadline:** 30.4.2018

**Information on Abstracts:** Abstract should contain name of the author, affiliation, name of the paper and its length should be 300 – 500 words.

**Notification for acceptance:** 31.5.2018