

People and Their Worth: Uniting Process and Axiology

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ABSTRACT: This article argues that process philosophy and Hartmanian formal axiology are natural allies that can contribute much to each other. Hartmanian axiology can bring much needed order and clarity to process thought about the definitions of “good,” “better,” and “best,” about what things are intrinsically good, and about the nature and value of unique, enduring, individual persons. Process thought can bring to axiology greater clarity about and emphasis on the relational and temporal features of human selfhood. The nature and significance of personal endurance is emphasized throughout.

For many years I have been thinking off and on about how to combine and harmonize two philosophical perspectives that have greatly influenced me—process philosophy and Hartmanian axiology. Chronologically, process philosophy came first. In the 1950s and early 1960s, I was a student of Charles Hartshorne and John B. Cobb, Jr. at Emory University, and of Robert L. Calhoun and many other theological luminaries at Yale Divinity School. I joined the University of Tennessee philosophy faculty in 1966. The following year, Robert S. Hartman came to teach in our department for a half-year at a time, the other half being spent at the National University of Mexico in Mexico City. While he was with us, and for many years thereafter, I was probably Hartman’s most severe critic, yet greatly intrigued by his teachings. Fifteen years or so after his death, I finally figured out that his most powerful insights into what and how we value could be separated from his utterly implausible excursions into infinity, to which I still have vehement philosophical objections. Since then, his ways of thinking about human values and valuations have slowly transformed my thinking, acting, feeling, and total personal outlook—though I still have a long way to go in self-development.

Process philosophy and Hartmanian formal axiology are natural partners that should be united. I hope to make a plausible case for this,

but first a historical note: this is not the first encounter of the two. In the 1960s, Charles Hartshorne and Robert S. Hartman were very much in contact. Hartshorne replied to Hartman's article on the ontological argument in his *Anselm's Discovery* (261-65). Soon after Hartman published *The Structure of Value* in 1967, Hartshorne sent to John W. Davis, our department head, a brochure about the graduate program at The University of Texas. Handwritten by Hartshorne at the bottom of the page were these words: "I've been reading R.S.H. Fantastically ingenious and challenging" (Hartman, "Formal" 54, 125). In 1995 and 1997, Hartshorne wrote two letters to Hartman asking him to clarify his position on such issues as God's necessary existence and the temporality of the human self, and Hartman wrote a response to him that I published in *Formal Axiology and Its Critics* (56-61).

My case for the claim that process philosophy and Hartmanian formal axiology are natural partners will focus primarily upon a process/axiological analysis of "self." Process thinkers heavily emphasize the temporal and relational aspects of human selfhood; Robert S. Hartman heavily emphasized the intrinsic worth of unique, enduring, human selves. I will argue that these two emphases belong harmoniously together and complete one another's inadequacies.

AXIOLOGY AND PROCESS SELFHOOD

"What is the meaning of 'good?'" and "What things or entities are intrinsically good?" To these two questions, posed by G.E. Moore, Robert S. Hartman had plausible answers. "Good" can be defined formally, despite what G.E. Moore said about its indefinability; it means "concept or standard fulfillment." To Moore's "What things or entities are intrinsically good?" Hartman answered that individual persons are intrinsically good, as are other unique conscious beings like God. This essay will focus on individual human beings, but nothing here should be interpreted as excluding the intrinsic worth of animals or nonhuman entities. Panpsychism just goes beyond the scope of this essay. Hartman insisted that every human being is unique and that our intrinsic goodness is tied to our uniqueness. Formal axiology, he said, affirms that the "highest value is the individual" (*Structure* 254). "Unique" is the value category that belongs to the realm of intrinsic value, the highest form of value; extrinsic "goodness" belongs to instrumental or useful values; "perfection" belongs to systemic or conceptual values (199).

Hartman wrote that uniqueness is not a property of an entity; it is a property of its properties, specifically, the *completeness* of its set of properties. “Unique,” he wrote, means that an entity has “all the properties that it has” (“Sputnik’s” 15). Unfortunately, this definition is inadequate if “uniqueness” is supposed to distinguish intrinsically good things from those that are merely extrinsically or systemically good. All concretely existing things have all the properties that they have, whether individual persons, individual rocks, or individual concepts. “Uniqueness” usually means “having properties, or configurations of properties, that nothing else has,” as Hartman also acknowledged (“Formal” 60); but even in this sense human selves are not uniquely unique. All existing bricks and thoughts are unique, if only with respect to having their distinctive *loci* in spacetime, or their distinctive meanings that nothing else has. Alfred North Whitehead recognized that each “eternal object” (each systemic concept or its referent, Hartman might say) is unique. According to Whitehead, “each eternal object is an individual which, in its own peculiar fashion, is what it is” (*SMW* 159) and “any eternal object is just itself” (171). The connection between the value of concretely existing human selves and uniqueness is much more tenuous than Hartman assumed. Being an unrepeatable individual human self is intimately connected with having properties, but this connection requires explanation. Uniqueness is a property of intrinsically good individual entities, but it cannot be the only intrinsic-good-making property. All intrinsically good entities (e.g., persons) are unique, but not all unique entities (e.g., ideas, things) are intrinsically good. Only unique beings that *also* exemplify other properties like consciousness, self-valuation, others-valuation, thinking, deciding, feeling, etc., are intrinsically good. Intrinsically good beings are a synthesis of uniqueness with such additional intrinsic-good-making properties, perhaps not all of them, but at least some (e.g., consciousness). Just how far these properties can be extended down into the nonhuman world is a continuing topic of lively debate, especially among process thinkers, but that is another issue.

But what is a “property”? Properties are qualities or relations, some actual, some only possible. Hartman distinguished between thoughts of or words for properties, reserving “intensions” and “predicates” for these, and the actual or potential realities to which words and thoughts refer, reserving “extensions” and “properties” for these (*Structure* 31, 103). “Meanings” can be intensional, extensional, or both. Ideas are meaningful,

but so are their referents. Some if not all qualitative predicate/properties are inherently relational in nature, most obviously “intentional” concepts like “desire” and “love,” both of which require objects to complete their intensional and extensional meanings; desires are always for something; love is always for someone or something. Predicates and properties as understood by Hartman obviously relate closely with “eternal objects,” as understood by Whitehead (*SMW*, Ch. X). Eternal objects initially are only relational possibilities for actualization located in the mind of God, but they may also exist in actualities in the real world. People are composed of temporally ordered sets of concrete, determinate predicate/properties or eternal objects.

Throughout this discussion, I will assume that Charles Hartshorne is correct in holding that actual existence adds a definiteness, determinateness, concreteness, “thisness,” or something to eternal objects that they do not have in themselves as mere possibilities (*WP* 31-34, 59, 95-97). This is why real people would have much more value than their mere possibilities, even if both contain identical sets of eternal objects (predicates or corresponding properties). Mere possibilities lack concreteness, which is an integral aspect of our actuality and uniqueness. Perhaps this is the real significance of the enigmatic philosophical judgment, “Existence is not a predicate.” Existence is not just another eternal object alongside all the others. Nevertheless, it really makes a difference!

What is a person?

We learn to distinguish between “people” or “persons,” “cats,” “rocks,” and “words” as we grow up. These are value-laden ordinary language concepts. Philosophers and theologians attempt to refine ordinary understandings using specialized philosophical or theological jargon. As Whitehead said, “Thus the very purpose of philosophy is to delve below the apparent clarity of common speech” (*AI* 222).

In traditional non-process philosophy, persons are technically defined in terms of “substances” and “attributes,” following Boethius, who defined a “person” as an “individual substance of a rational nature” (84f). Traditionally, rationality, as Aristotle said, is the essential defining attribute of human substances. Substances as such are the enduring, unchanging, and unexperientable realities to which all predicates/properties/qualities/relations (like rationality) belong. Substances have only a few skimpy identifying properties of their own: self-sufficiency (despite their obvious

contingency), endurance, changelessness, and foundational support for and ownership of changing qualities and relations. For the most part, they are just “supposed somethings we know not what.” They and their skimpy properties are never given to us in experience, as David Hume indicated. “Substance,” like “unicorn” is an intension without a corresponding extension. It is a vacuous conceptual construct, an instance of Whitehead’s “misplaced concreteness.”

The traditional substance/attribute perspective affirms that all of us are the same changeless individual substances from birth to death, though many of our attributes (except for our “essences”—e.g., “rationality,” or “character”) are in a state of flux throughout our lives, some more so than others. Even rationality and character are not really as constant as they were once cracked up to be. We are only intermittently rational and are often out of character. Yet, self-identity through time is absolute in substance and essence according to traditional non-process philosophy. Dualistic philosophies further distinguish between mental and material substances, identifying “self” only with non-spatial mental or conscious substances that are imprisoned in alien material or spatially extended bodies.

Persons in process thought

Process thought challenges traditional substance/attribute, mind/body dualisms. No absolutely enduring substances or essences exist; people are incredibly complex causally and temporally connected sets of concretizing happenings in time (events, occasions) in which eternal objects or properties/predicates inhere momentarily, perish, and transmit what they can of themselves into their immediate temporal successors. Self-identity through time is relative, not absolute, for there are no enduring, changeless, and self-sufficient substances. Considering our actual properties, we are only relatively the same persons today that we were ten years ago, for many of our character traits (concretized universals or eternal objects) have changed, even if others persist. “Substance” (with its skimpy properties) is not one of *our* properties at any stage along life’s way. Repudiating substances in general involves rejecting both the distinction between mental and material substances, and the depreciation of embodiment that typically accompanies it. In process thought, consciousness or mentality (broadly understood) in human beings is inherently embodied. At fundamental levels, all spatially extended entities have psychological properties (even if only unconscious), and all psychological entities have

spatial properties. Because the primary emphasis of process thought is on time rather than space, mind/body dualism can be rejected—without getting rid of either minds or bodies.

Traditional philosophical empiricists are psychologically hung up on space, which is why they recognize the reality and validity only of “external” sense experiences and their “material” world. This is why, for them, all girls are just “material girls.” And the rest of us also are only material beings having merely those sets of properties (extrinsic value properties, Hartman would say) that are given to us through our ordinary “external” senses of touch, sight, hearing, taste, and smell. By contrast, in process thought, experience is primarily temporal, and our most basic or primitive experiences are temporal and subjective or psychological, not spatial and sensory. Whitehead held that receiving data and subjective forms (e.g., memories, purposes, feelings, thoughts, etc.) from the immediate predecessors of our momentarily existing selves is the most basic form of human experience (*AI* 180-84). Time, however it is analyzed, is metaphysically and experientially fundamental, though noticing this seems to require some special philosophical talent and personal self-development. Space is integral to time, and time to space—hence “spacetime” rather than “space” versus “time.”

Persons are temporally ordered “societies” of successive and causally connected spacetime occurrences or “occasions” of self-experience and creativity. A single person consists of that vast connected chain or stream of causally and creatively ordered temporal occasions that manifests itself between birth and death, including all the bodily processes, choices, thoughts, feelings, creative syntheses, and determinate eternal objects belonging to that stream. The stream of consciousness, the dominant temporally ordered society within the human body, is only the tip of the iceberg (though no less valuable for being so). An individual person is all of her or his properties from birth to death, whether they be occasions or relations, psychological or physical, conscious or unconscious, thinking or feeling, or whatever. But our properties are not exclusively spatial and sensory. On this, Hartman and process thinkers agree; and this enables both to making a legitimate place for what Hartman would call systemic and intrinsic, in addition to extrinsic, properties and values.

Persons in Hartmanian axiology

How does Hartmanian axiology relate to this process understanding of human personhood? The best Hartmanian concept of unique *individual* human personhood I have been able to formulate is, “A unique individual person is the integrated totality of all of his or her properties (qualities and relations).” In short, we are “our total property inventory.” Hartman himself came very close to formulating this next definition when he wrote of “x’s self, i.e. the integral totality of all of x’s attributes” (“Nature” 15). Process philosophy emphasizes that all the temporal occasions of our past, present, and future belong to our total property inventory. Much that Hartman wrote adds up to this. He clearly regarded individual persons in their full determinateness, concreteness, and uniqueness as intrinsically good, as opposed to the extrinsic goodness of the “things” of the public sensory world, and the systemic worth of mere ideas or “concepts.” A unique or “singular” fact (like an individual person), he wrote, “has the full concreteness of all its properties” (*Structure* 96). It is “in a class all by itself” (162). Taking Socrates as his example, Hartman wrote, “It is, I think, beyond doubt that the proper name ‘Socrates’ refers to all of Socrates and not to some section of his properties. It refers to the totality known and observed as Socrates” (“Singular” 26). Hartman recognized that “The individual exists in space and time. The concept of it is in the mind” (34), and he acknowledged that for many purposes we require concepts “where spatio-temporal existence itself is part of meaning” (36). He gave organismic intellectual and artistic creativity as examples (36-43). In another article, agreeing explicitly with process theologians, he treated “God” as such a concept, writing that God, “by the necessity of his nature, is continuously surpassing himself—a necessary ever self-surpassing, self-concreting on-going” (“Value” 275) and that “Since God never exhausts his potentiality, the world is continually being created; and God and the world are continuously in the I/Thou relation of creativity. All past properties of the world were in God as predicates, that is, as thoughts to be realized; and all future properties of the world are in God as predicates to be realized” (278).

Human beings, Hartman acknowledged, are constantly creative, thus constantly temporal, some much more creative than others, for “the vast majority of men stop at narrow ranges of creativity” (278). The temporality of the human self is more implicit in some of Hartman’s writings than explicit, though usually explicit enough. His whole axiological

psychology is about human self-development through time in multiple value dimensions. It pinpoints human shortcomings when self-development in three dimensions takes place asymmetrically or does not take place as it should. He regularly emphasized the relationality of selfhood, often quoting with admiration Kierkegaard's definition of the self as "a relation which relates itself to its own self" ("Self" 418). Hartman was not always as crystal clear about the temporality of human selfhood as he should have been, as I have explained elsewhere ("Some" 41-50) and this is where process thought can best contribute valid insight and clarity to Hartmanian philosophy.

Process thinkers stress that we are "relational" selves, as reflected in the titles of many recent books. We are largely constituted by subjective forms, purposes, aims, and data inherited through causal relations with a vast plethora of events in our past, especially our most immediate past; these include our own past creative decisions, God's loving nurturing and nudging us toward what is best, our genetic and bodily endowment, our social relations with other people and living creatures, and a vast portion of the antecedent universe. The focus, though, is on time. If Hartmanian "selfhood" is to be reconciled with process selfhood, being "the integrated totality of all of our properties, both qualitative and relational," must be qualified by temporality. "Having all of our properties" is not a done deal. At any given moment, we have a vast plethora of properties, both actual and possible, but our total set of actual properties is unfinished until death do us depart. Aristotle suggested that no one could be *completely* happy until he (or she) is dead, because something bad might happen in the future to spoil everything. Without getting bogged down in that, we should understand that none of us have all of our actual properties *completely* until we are dead—and not even then if there is survival after death with new events or happenings. We are temporally ordered selves, and "our total property inventory" is always unfinished as long as we live. Hartman wrote, "The outstanding feature of a dead person is that nothing happens with him anymore, that he is no source any more of properties or features" ("Singular" 43). He and process thinkers agree that we are appreciably self-creative; we are responsible co-creators with God of ourselves; and what our future selves will be like depends significantly on the decisions that we make here and now in the subjective immediacy and creativity of our present moment of what Whitehead called "sheer individuality" (*AI* 177).

What kinds of properties constitute human selves and human well-being? Here, Hartmanian axiology can significantly structure and enrich process thought. Hartman would answer in terms of three basic kinds of properties that correspond to three basic kinds of value—systemic, extrinsic, and intrinsic. All three are integral parts of our total property inventories and our unique personal worth.

Systemic properties are thought properties—ideas, concepts, words, beliefs, rules, laws, ritual forms, mathematics, logic, and such. Philosophical, theological, and scientific belief systems are composed of systemic properties or entities. To the extent that they are within us, they partly constitute who we are, our total property inventory. Systemic properties are systemic values, so we are partly composed of systemic values. As we think and learn conceptually, our systemic properties are enriched; the systemic parts of selfhood, of ourselves, are increased.

Extrinsic properties are spatiotemporal properties existing in our common perceptual everyday world of spacetime. Philosophers traditionally defined “extrinsic values” in terms of actual or potential usefulness. Without denying this, Hartman primarily emphasized their actual or potential existence as things, processes, and activities in our common public perceptual spacetime world—hereafter, “things,” for short. Colors, odors, sounds, tastes, shapes, sizes, motions, etc., and all their actual and possible combinations, no matter how intricate, are extrinsic properties. We value things in spacetime as extrinsic values to the degree that they fulfill our expectations of them, that is, fulfill the standards we apply to them, including overall usefulness. Our bodies consist of extrinsic properties that are integral parts of our total property inventories, thus integral aspects of who we really are. As we nurture and care for our bodies, we are enriched with good-making extrinsic properties. We also live in a spatiotemporal universe, a physical environment of things that can enrich (or impoverish) our experiences and our lives. As we take the properties of objectively existing spatiotemporal things into ourselves in sensory perception and affective appreciation, they become parts of our own personal property inventories, parts of ourselves, our extrinsic selves. To the extent that things fulfill our expectations and the standards we apply to them, they are extrinsically good.

Extrinsic value objects, as Hartman understood them, are grossly perceptual objects considered only as such, or only in the mode of “presentational immediacy,” as Whitehead might say, but still as causes or

means to ends. They are roughly the same as “aggregates” as understood in process thought—things, processes, and activities considered as devoid of consciousness or internal experiencing. Even human beings or bodies can be so considered. People and animals having their own streams of consciousness are often regarded and treated as “mere things,” and much immorality involves just that.

The present emphasis on conscious human beings does not mean that there is no deeper experiencing or awareness in plant cells, atoms, or electrons, only that this is a separate issue that goes beyond the scope of this essay. So does the question of how much experiencing at those levels is conscious and how much unconscious. Hartmanian thought can be enriched by what process thinkers have had to say about animals and panpsychism, but panpsychists have to decide whether most experiencing in the non-animal world is not unconscious (as is much human experiencing), and whether unconscious experiences and psychic properties have any intrinsic worth. Whitehead clearly held that no actualities are “vacuous,” that all actualities experience and have value (*RM* 100), but is that enough? Is having value exactly the same thing as having intrinsic value?

Intrinsic properties include *all* our properties, our total inventory, but some human properties are *distinctively intrinsic*; that is, they do not belong to our systemic and extrinsic property inventories—for example, our consciousness and self-awareness, with all their contents, capacities, and activities, including our creativity, and our abilities to identify with entities valued, to love, to empathize, to be compassionate. Uniquely intrinsic properties also include our moral and spiritual virtues like fulfilling our self-expectations, being true to ourselves, exercising self-control, being courageous, fair or just, faithful, hopeful, honest, sincere, trustworthy, and the like. As we intensify and develop our intrinsic-value-enhancing properties and capacities, our personal property inventory is enriched with the best personal good-making properties of all. Our distinctively intrinsic properties are integral parts of who we are, but so are our systemic and extrinsic properties. Our total enduring selves with all our properties, including the qualities, relations, and configurations that make us unique, are intrinsic goods, and we are ends to, in, and for ourselves. This claim about our intrinsic worth pertains to our total temporally ordered unique selves, not just to the transient self of the present moment. Our distinctively intrinsic properties, including those at the

cores of our personalities, change, develop, increase, and enrich out total property inventories through time.

Much more could be said about Hartmanian axiology's perspective on human selfhood, but this should get us started. More will be forthcoming. Hartman himself would doubtless add that people have not just intrinsic but infinite worth because they have an infinite number of good-making properties, but I vehemently opposed this claim from the moment I first heard it and have published my objections to it in several places (e.g., "Value" 141-47). As I finally realized after many years, however, the good stuff in Hartmanian axiology can be separated from its occasional absurdities.

WHAT AXIOLOGY CAN CONTRIBUTE TO PROCESS THEOLOGY

I invite process thinkers to learn more about Hartmanian axiology because it can add significantly to their presently available thought structures and content. It can contribute significantly to hitherto neglected or underdeveloped aspects of process thought. I will identify three such enrichments, though more could be said. To process thought, axiology can contribute greater order and clarity about:

- the definitions of "good," "better," and "best,"
- what things are intrinsically good, and
- the nature and value of unique, enduring, individual persons.

The definition of "good"

Axiology can contribute clarity and systematic orderliness to process philosophy's answer to G.E. Moore's first two questions of ethics, "What does "good" mean?" and "What things are good?"

Let us start with the first, What does "good" mean? How shall we define this word or concept? Process thinkers frequently answer G.E. Moore's second question, but they greatly neglect his first, which today we would classify as a "metaethical" question. They identify many good things—somewhat unsystematically, I should add—good things like truth, reason, knowledge, intense feeling, harmony, beauty, unity in variety, richness of experience, creativity, freedom, adventure, peace, enjoyment, self-enjoyment, love, compassion, etc. But they seldom if ever give us an analysis of the meaning of "good," the concept that covers and applies to all such good things. They may think the question unimportant, or, in confusion, they may equate good things with the meaning of "good," thus committing Moore's infamous "naturalistic fallacy." I am not the first to

notice process thought's inadequacies in value theory and the treatment of "The Good"; Paul Arthur Schilpp, for example, noticed this fairly early in the game (563-618, especially 592ff); but these problems persist today. To get a sense for this, look for "good" in the indexes of the many books on process thought published in the last twenty-five years. You will not find it in most, and when you do find it, the references are to good things, not to goodness itself. Even with "Good" in the title, there is no index entry at all for "good" in Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr., *For the Common Good*.

Hartman can do better. The "axiom" of his formal axiology is his definition of "good," namely, "good is concept (or standard) fulfillment." This is a real definition, despite G.E. Moore's insistence that the concept is undefinable, but it is not a "naturalistic" definition that identifies "good" with "good things" like those mentioned in the preceding paragraph. As a formal definition, it gives "the form of the good," the formal pattern common to all judgments of goodness. In common, all "X is good" judgments match the actual properties of some X with expectations for Xs, as contained and expressed in the predicates of someone's concept of an ideal X. The properties of good Xs fulfill or match the predicates in the normative standards that we apply to them. Such properties are their "good-making" properties. A good X is as it is supposed to be; it has all relevant good-making properties. A fair X has most of them, an average X has about half, a poor X has relatively few, and a bad or no-good X has almost no such good-making properties at all. That is what "good" and degrees thereof mean. Our standards may vary and come from many sources, including traditions, influential others, or our own creative choices. As Hartman pointed out, this formal definition of good "is *objective*. It is valid for every rational being whatever . . . But its application is *subjective*" (*Structure* 110). We can debate and disagree about which standards to accept and apply; but the form of the good is always the same: good things exemplify the good-making properties of the concepts (sets of good-making predicates) that we apply to them.

Good things measure up to their ideals. Consider an example. A process understanding of "a good human life" will tell us that people have good lives to the extent that they exemplify "truth, reason, knowledge, intense feeling, harmony, beauty, unity in variety, richness of experience, creativity, freedom, adventure, peace, enjoyment, self-enjoyment, love, compassion, etc." These good-life-making properties can be instantiated

by degrees, and most if not all of them are not distinctively human, so some people or animals may live only fair lives, average lives, poor lives, or no-good lives. Hartman explained all of this in considerable detail, and I have explicated and expanded his position in many places (*Structure and Dicken Dialogues* 181-210, 206-10), so I will not now go further. But I will say, “It really works!” and process thinkers would do well to take advantage of it. Related formal definitions of “better” and “best” will be given in the next section.

What things are good, better, best?

We now know how process thinkers tend to answer, “What things are good?” But how does Hartmanian axiology answer? Axiology affirms that there are different kinds of goodness or value, and that different things can be good in different value dimensions. There are at least three different kinds or dimensions of goodness, all involving concept or standard fulfillment: systemic value, extrinsic value, and intrinsic value. Systemic value is conceptual goodness. Ideas, concepts, words, beliefs, doctrines, philosophical, theological, and scientific systems, rules, laws, ritual forms, mathematics, logic, and the like are systemically good entities. Extrinsicly good or valuable entities are “pragmatically” valuable objects, processes, and activities located in our common sensory “external” world of space-time. Not all extrinsically good things are “external,” however, since our bodies and our activities involving them are extrinsically good and are integral parts of our total property inventory—our intrinsic goodness. Intrinsically good entities, ends in themselves, entities valuable for their own sakes, are individual persons and other unique conscious beings like God, animals, etc. The lives and experiences of intrinsically good beings may be enriched in many different ways by desirable intrinsic-good-enriching properties or determinate “eternal objects” like appropriate feelings, moral and spiritual growth, and most of the good things mentioned in “**The definition of ‘good.’**” I call them “intrinsic value enhancers.”

Process thinkers are generally on the right track, I believe, when they tell us what things are good. The trouble is, their answers are diverse, selective, unsystematic, and often quite unclear. A review of the literature will find process thinkers affirming the goodness of all the good things mentioned **previous section**—truth, reason, knowledge, intense feeling, harmony, beauty, unity in variety, richness of experience, creativity, free-

dom, adventure, peace, enjoyment, self-enjoyment, love, compassion, etc. Whitehead affirmed the value of all of these in various sections of *Adventures of Ideas*. However, value-affirmations by process thinkers, including Whitehead, are often narrowly selective; here and there, particular items in this list receive special emphasis; the meanings of many of these items are often quite unclear; and no one offers a comprehensive value theory that differentiates between distinctive kinds of value or goodness and that pulls them all together into systematic axiological order. Here, Hartmanian axiology can do better and offer improvements.

The narrow selectivity of process thinkers comes out, for example, in the diverse ways in which they deal with God's "aims" or "purposes" for the world. Logically, God could have quite different aims for the world, for human social orders, for inclusive individual persons, and for individual occasions. Logically also, God's aims for all three could be the same, as process thinkers usually suggest. Consider the following diverse and highly selective accounts of God's aim(s).

In *Process and Reality*, Whitehead affirmed that "God's purpose in the creative advance is the evocation of intensities" (105), specifically "maximum depth of intensity of feeling" for every occasion (249, 27) I have long been troubled by this claim for at least three reasons.

First, Whitehead makes no distinction here between desirable and undesirable feelings. Love and compassion are desirable "intrinsic value enhancing" feelings, and the more intense the better; hatred, despair, and physical suffering and anguish are undesirable "intrinsic value diminishing" feelings, and the more intense the worse. Does God aim at, should each occasion aim, at maximum intensity of *all* such feelings? Here, Whitehead does not say otherwise. In fact, he does not even consider the problem; yet he should have. In traditional Christian theology, the Devil also aims at maximum intensity of feelings! In this quotation, Whitehead is both embarrassingly unclear in not distinguishing between desirable and undesirable feelings to be intensified, and highly selective in emphasizing only feelings. One might think that this problem could be resolved with Whitehead's distinction between "positive" and "negative" prehensions (*PR* 35ff), but this is not so. Whitehead clearly does not say that God aims solely at positive prehensions, and the highly technical meaning that he gives to this distinction makes it irrelevant for present purposes, for he clearly did not identify positive prehensions with those devoid of pain and suffering, excruciating or not.

Second, what Whitehead meant by “feelings” is very unclear. As Jorge Luis Nobo pointed out, “The term ‘feeling’ is used ambiguously by Whitehead” (28). Whitehead’s term seems almost synonymous with “experiencing,” broadly understood as processing data with subjective forms. This clearly does not avoid the above difficulty, for there are horrible as well as wonderful modes of experiencing, both of which can be powerfully intensified. Ordinarily, when we want to distinguish feelings from such things as thinking and acting, we limit “feelings” to emotions, desires, pleasures, and pains. Hartman seems to have so limited “feelings,” and at least some of Whitehead’s remarks like the one above might be so construed. Still, we definitely would not want all of our feelings in this sense to be intensified! Some emotions, desires, and pain sensitivities are quite undesirable. In other contexts, Whitehead recognizes this, as when he writes of aesthetic destructiveness, that “This is the feeling of evil in the most general sense, namely physical pain or mental evil, such as sorrow, horror, dislike.” (*AI* 256; compare *RM* 95). Too bad that he did not give this qualification when speaking of God’s aim for the world!

Third, Whitehead’s emphasis on feelings alone, even if we give him the benefit of the doubt about touting only *desirable* ones, was narrowly one-sided, in addition to being unclear. His affirmation of God’s aim for the world in the above quote might mean that God aims at the intensification of emotions, desires, pleasures, and pains. Even if we omit pains, these feelings belong to but do not exhaust the realm of intrinsic goodness, and considering feelings alone totally neglects extrinsic and systemic goodness. Human beings trying to follow Whitehead’s advice about intensifying feelings might “aim” *exclusively* at intensifying emotions, desires, and pleasures, nothing more, but they would be practically inept and mentally stupid! Results from the Hartman Value Profile, an exceptionally powerful personality profile, show that some real people are like this; we might call them “romanticists” or “love slobs.” They have an intrinsic value astigmatism; they are somewhat developed intrinsically (in emotions and other feelings) but poorly developed practically (extrinsically) and conceptually (systemically). Whitehead may not have meant to be so one-sided in this value pronouncement, but perhaps he was!

To his credit, Whitehead was not always so narrowly focused in identifying “aims.” “Morality,” he wrote, “is always the aim at that union of harmony, intensity, and vividness which involves the perfection of importance for that occasion” (*MT* 14). Even this expanded formula-

tion of aims suffers from indefiniteness and narrowness. Its three value properties, harmony, intensity, and vividness, leave us wondering: What kind(s) of harmony, intensity, and vividness? If limited to harmonious, intense, and vivid *feelings*, we have made little progress. Should something more than mere feelings be harmonized, intensified, and vividified? Why not a harmony, intensity, and vividness of systemic, extrinsic, and intrinsic values?

We must ask also, “Harmony, intensity, and vividness *for whom?*” Whitehead’s answer here seems very unsatisfactory: “for that occasion.” Is morality really so narrowly focused that it aims only for something that endures for a fraction of a second—“that occasion”? Surely not! Why not add, “over the long run for everyone and every future occasion affected”? Again, to his credit, Whitehead did recognize the importance of aims toward the future. He wrote that “subjective aim, whereby there is origination of conceptual feeling, is at intensity of feeling (α) in the immediate subject, and (β) in the relevant future,” and he acknowledged that “morality hinges on the determination of relevance in the future” (PR 27). Cobb clearly points morality toward the future:

First, we are called to realize value in each moment. Second, we are called to determine the present in such a way that it will contribute value to the future. Whitehead thinks of the former aspect of the goal as primarily aesthetic, the latter as moral. But the moral aim for future occasions is primarily at their realization of aesthetic value in the future. (110)

Again, why not the realization of intrinsic, extrinsic, and systemic values, not just *aesthetic* values, in the future?

“Harmony, intensity, and vividness” is how most process thinkers define “beauty” (53). Whitehead himself said that “The teleology of the Universe is directed to the production of Beauty” (AI 265). Beauty often seems to be the most fundamental value of all in process thought, but I question this. Beauty is only an abstraction, an eternal object, but it is not an actual entity, a concretely existing conscious individual, not even when actualized. Does beauty as such have intrinsic worth, or is it valuable only because it enriches the lives of enduring concretely existing conscious individuals—people, animals, God? Do repeatable abstractions, i.e., eternal objects (or systemic value objects), have intrinsic worth, or does intrinsic worth belong only or primarily to concretely existing conscious individuals? Could abstractions like “beauty” or “truth” or “peace”

ever have intrinsic worth in, to, and for themselves? Beauty, truth, and peace as such have no mind or individuated consciousness of their own. Whitehead defines “intrinsic importance” as “importance for itself,” (*MT* 118), and he speaks of “aesthetic worth for its own sake” (*MT* 119), but in what sense could beauty, truth, or peace have importance for themselves? How could beauty have worth for *its own* sake? Would G.E. Moore’s absolutely beautiful world that no conscious individual, not even God, ever experiences have intrinsic worth? Although process thinkers often intimate that beauty is axiologically fundamental, perhaps they should reconsider. Actual entities are metaphysically fundamental; why are they not also axiologically fundamental? If aesthetics is the intrinsic valuation of beauty, and ethics is the intrinsic valuation of persons (or experiencing entities), why isn’t ethics more fundamental than aesthetics? Not beauty as such, but beauty-for us, beauty-as-enhancing-concrete-individuals, is what has intrinsic worth. When Whitehead wrote, “Beauty is the mutual adaptation of the several factors in an occasion of experience” (*AI* 252 and following), he moved in this direction, except that “for us” is more enduring than “an occasion.” In most discussions of beauty and aesthetics as fundamental in process thought, the “an occasion” or “for us” part is greatly neglected. My point is not that this is altogether missing, but that it deserves much more emphasis.

Other recent process pronouncements about God’s aims or purposes for the world and for human beings are also axiologically incomplete, indefinite, and lacking in clarity. Consider next some examples from *The Call of the Spirit: Process Spirituality in a Relational World* by John B. Cobb, Jr., Bruce G. Epperly, and Paul S. Nancarrow. The authors of this book say that God aims at, and we should aim at, what is *best*. As Cobb puts it, “God calls us to be and to do what is best” (24, 110, and compare Epperly, 124). No account of the meaning of “best” is given, and, though Cobb mentions “aesthetic value,” he offers no relevant details (110), perhaps because he has done so elsewhere.

That “We are called to be and to do what is best” invites additional axiological questions. Process thinkers neglect both the definition of “good” and the definition of “best.” How do these authors define “best”? We get no answer. Formal axiology offers plausible and useful definitions of both “good” and “best.” We saw that “good” involves exemplifying the good-making properties in the relevant set of norms or standards. “Better” and “best” also involve sets of good-making properties. If X and Y belong

to the same class of comparison, X is *better* than Y if X has more relevant good-making properties than Y. X is the *best* of the lot if it exemplifies more good-making properties than the others in its class of comparison. X would be absolutely best (like God) if it exemplifies *all* consistently combinable good-making properties—including the property of creating free and co-creative creatures. Hartman defined “better” in terms of “richness.” “Better” means “Richer in properties,” he wrote (*Structure* 114). Adding “good-making” to his definition improves it (“richer in good-making properties”), because “worse” and “worst” involve richness in properties—bad-making ones, though Hartman never realized this. By extension, “best” means “richest in good-making properties,” and “worst” means “richest in bad-making properties” (“Value” 208). I wholeheartedly agree with Cobb’s claim that “God calls us to be and to do what is best.” Process thinkers are definitely on the right track, but I would add that this means, axiologically, that God calls us to live lives that are as rich as we can make them in good-making properties of all kinds, that is, in all value dimensions.

Cobb and Nancarrow also emphasize *richness* of experience, which they only sketchily explain and illustrate. Cobb writes that “God calls each human occasion of experience to actualize the richest possibility in the new moment” (31), and Nancarrow suggests that “God’s purpose in the world is the evocation of ever-richer forms of experience” (53, 55, 90, 131, 135). But what does this “richness” involve? Richness of what? Richness cannot credibly be reduced to intense positive feelings, to aesthetic abstractions, or to any one value dimension—the intrinsic alone, the extrinsic alone, or the systemic alone. A human life that exemplifies maximal richness in all three value dimensions is better (richer) than a life that is almost exclusively intrinsic, or extrinsic, or systemic. A truly *abundant* individual human life requires optimal personal development in all three dimensions of value; otherwise, a life even richer in good-making properties is conceivable. People who do not develop in all three value dimensions are “axiologically challenged” and end up with serious “problems in living,” as psychologists might put it. God is that reality than whom none richer in all dimensions of consistently combinable good-making properties can be conceived, including constantly creative self-surpassing.

The value of unique, enduring, individual persons

So what is the primary value of unique, enduring, individual persons, according to process thought? To answer, we must return to our original problem, “What is a person?” and to a central affirmation of Hartmanian axiology, “Individual persons are intrinsically good.”

Whitehead emphasized “the importance of the individual” (*AI* 292) and “the intrinsic importance of an experience,” which means “importance for itself” (*MT* 118). However, we cannot infer from “an experience” that he thought that enduring individual persons are either important or intrinsically good. In process thought, beginning with Whitehead, the only real individuals are momentary temporal occasions, enduring only fractions of a second (*AI* 177, 186). Whitehead affirmed importance and intrinsic worth for these, but did he also do so clearly enough for persons in the “ordinary” sense of the term—persons as existing from birth to death, individuals in a more enduring and inclusive sense? He spoke of actual occasions as having importance, intrinsic worth, or existing for their own sake. However, “Do I, do other people, have intrinsic worth?” is not usually a question about the self of the fleeting moment. It is about something much more enduring and inclusive.

Standard process metaphysics does give us an analysis of the constitution of inclusive human persons, what Whitehead called “enduring individualities” (*AI* 280-81). Technically, inclusive persons are not individuals. Ordinary persons are societies—vastly complex temporally enduring and spatially extended collections of momentary occasions. These relatively abiding societies are unified by common and intimate strands of causation. The events of which we are composed share common lines of inheritance and common “subjective forms.” In more familiar language, our “souls” or “selves” have personal identity and our “characters” have continuity through time because certain memories, desires, aims, purposes, emotions, convictions, etc., endure and persist relatively unchanged over large spans of our lives. Today and tomorrow we are and will be relatively the same persons we were yesterday and the day before because our past feelings, purposes, experiences, memories, etc., are repeated and intimately included in what we are now and in what we will be in the future.

Axiologists emphasize that we are the “same persons” through time because our values and our patterns of valuation tend to persist. What and how we value, our values and valuations, are the real things that make us

who we are now and over the course of time. Yet, we do and can change, and, using the Hartman Value Profile, axiologists know how to measure both the enduring and the changing aspects of personal identity, continuity, and discontinuity. (To learn more about the HVP, go to: <<http://www.hartmaninstitute.org/TheHartmanValueProfile/tabid/57/Default.aspx>>.) Personal identity is valuationally three dimensional, not just one dimensional, not just a matter of feelings. We inherit and transmit to the future not only common intrinsic subjective forms (purposes, feelings, desires etc.), but also persevering extrinsic behavioral propensities and persisting systemic ideas, thoughts, convictions, and beliefs. All of these values we now know how to rank and measure, and all are constitutive of our total property inventories.

Unique enduring persons are embodied (spatially extended) souls inseparably conjoined by common causal inheritances, structures, properties, and concreteness. We are not disembodied souls temporarily imprisoned in our bodies. Whitehead identified the human “soul” with our human stream of consciousness, or with what he called the “dominant personal society” (*AI* 206) within the human body, pointing out that souls exists only intermittently because of sleep (*MT* 162). “The soul is nothing else than the succession of my occasions of experience, extending from birth to present moment. Now, at this instant, I am *the complete person* embodying all these occasions” (163, italics added). Souls are inherently embodied and inclusive; our intimate sense or feeling of union with our bodies is a “primary experience.” Soul/body unity is a primary reality. Both bodies and souls are integral parts of who we are, and we normally just take this for granted without lapsing into Platonic/Cartesian mind-matter dualism. As Whitehead remarked, “No one ever says, Here am I, and I have brought my body with me” (114). In axiological terms, our extrinsic selves (I act, etc., therefore, I am) are just as much a part of our total property inventory as our intrinsic selves (I feel, etc., therefore, I am) and our systemic selves (I think, etc., therefore, I am). If being an enduring actual/potential field of or for consciousness is one of our properties, that, too, is included.

Whitehead conceived of “personal unity” or “personal identity” along lines remarkably similar to axiology’s “our total property inventory.” He compared it, not to Plato’s “Soul,” but to Plato’s “Receptacle,” the repository of all natural events. He wrote that “personal identity is the thing which receives all occasions of the man’s existence” (*AI* 187). Yes, he regarded each individual occasion as having intrinsic importance, but what

about our total property inventory? What about our total unique personal unity or identity, the inclusive “I”? Whitehead’s answer is fuzzy, if it can be found at all, and so it is with later process thinkers. Yet, this is the vital question that most of us want answered. Are inclusive enduring persons, not just our fleeting moments, intrinsically good? Do we unique human beings from birth to death have intrinsic worth? Could we be inclusive ends in, to, and for ourselves, if metaphysically we are only relatively coherent and causally connected societies of temporal occasions? Does the process metaphysics of persons as societies of evanescent occasion really account for the significance that we attach to enduring persons as ends in themselves? Inferring that wholes have a certain property (e.g., intrinsic worth) just because each part has that property commits the informal logical fallacy of composition, so we cannot infer logically that we as enduring persons, but still in process, have intrinsic worth just because all of our momentary parts or occasions do. By the same logic, we as enduring persons could have intrinsic worth even if, though unlikely, none of our single occasions do. In the end, we must reach the conclusion that our total property inventory has intrinsic worth in the same way that we reach the conclusion that our fleeting moments have intrinsic worth. Namely, we must, and we do, find after careful and persistent consideration that this axiomatic judgment accords with our deepest, most enduring, and most carefully considered intuitions of worth. Enduring judgments and determinations of intrinsic worth are so basic, I doubt that they can be derived logically from anything else, though we can say things that help bring these intuitions up into the light of consciousness where they can be carefully considered. Perhaps God provides us with such very basic axiological intuitions as a way of luring us toward what is best.

Cobb wrote, “From a Whiteheadian perspective, the absence of any substantial identity through time does not necessarily lead to disparaging an emphasis on personal identity. We do inherit most of what we are in each moment from antecedent moments of personal experience. . . . There can, therefore, be spiritualities based on enduring personal existence in distinction from those that focus on momentary existence” (27). My complaint is not that process thinkers entirely neglect total or enduring selfhood in favor of momentary selfhood, only that what they say about this needs deeper analysis, greater emphasis, and a process metaphysics that allows for enduring selfhood. I add once more that Hartmanian axiology can help. Hartman had a lot to say about *how* we value as well as *what* we

value. He distinguished systemic, extrinsic, and intrinsic valuation partly in terms of the kinds of concepts fulfilled in each, and partly by different degrees of personal and emotional involvement. A continuum of feeling runs from the minimal involvement of systemic valuation, through the everyday pragmatic interestedness of extrinsic valuation, to the intense personal involvement of intrinsic valuation. In optimal intrinsic valuation, we identify completely with what we value, so that it becomes an integral part of ourselves; and the differences, though they do not disappear, no longer matter.

Process thought could be deepened by the insight that we do in fact identify with our unified total temporal selves in many morally and spiritually significant ways, whereas we almost never consciously identify ourselves with our momentary psychic pulsations. Expressed axiologically, we do intrinsically evaluate ourselves, our “enduring individualities,” as having intrinsic worth, as ends in ourselves, as valuable our own sakes. In our more moral moments, we also evaluate other people that way, though the scope of our intrinsic concern for others is often pathetically limited. Moral and spiritual growth consists largely in expanding the scope of our intrinsic concern for and with ourselves and other *enduring* individualities.

Valuing our enduring unified individualities intrinsically means partly that we know, experience, and have fulfilled concepts of ourselves, and partly that we intensely identify psychologically and axiologically with ourselves, with our own past, present, and future. Abnormality excepted, we usually have a concept of and strongly identify with our past, present, and future selves, our enduring selves, whether they be good or bad. Process views of the self as a society of momentary occasions harbors ongoing puzzles about the unity of enduring personhood. How can a present actual occasion be and feel responsible for past decisions and actions when they were made by different actual occasions that have long since perished? How can a present actual occasion be concerned about distinct future actual occasions that do not yet exist? The answer must be that we primarily identify axiologically and psychologically with our unified enduring individualities, not with our momentary selves, and something about us gives us the capacity to do that. What Whitehead might call “continuity of subjective form” has more value, a profound intrinsic value, that many process thinkers have greatly neglected, especially those most influenced by Hartshorne. But more than mere subjective forms and societies of occasions may be involved.

By some process accounts, God is a single, enduring, continuously concrescing actual entity (Edwards, "God" 42-47; *What* " 244-53); could there be shadows and images of such divine things within creation? I suggested this possibility in a 1975 article in *Process Studies* ("The Human Self"). Perhaps embodied (spatially extended) souls, both human and divine, are neither unchanging substances nor mere societies of constantly perishing occasions. Rather, *souls or selves are enduring fields* that partly structure, and in turn are given content by, the particular events and societies of occasions that occur within them. Physical (spatially extended) fields (e.g., gravitational, electromagnetic, and quantum) are not flickering occasions. Rather, they are enduring, structured, but invisible wholes or regions of spacetime that impose a certain kind of order upon the parts or occasions that they contain. So it is with enduring souls.

More influenced by Whitehead than Hartshorne, but willing to make modifications, is Lewis Ford, who developed in some depth the idea that human selves are enduring actual entities (not societies) with open concrescence, meaning that they do not have to perish first in order to achieve unity and produce effects beyond themselves (291-318). This, I think, is exactly what process thinkers need if they are going to take ethics seriously, and if they are going to be taken seriously as ethicists. Without something like this, process thinkers cannot account adequately for people and their worth. The way we actually experience and value ourselves and our personal unity is much better expressed metaphysically in terms of continuously concrescing enduring fields than in terms of transmitted subjective forms and societies of fleeting actual occasions. In his many publications, Joseph A Bracken has proposed that we "rethink the nature of Whiteheadian societies as structured fields of activity for their constituent actual occasions" ("Field" 312. See also "Energy-Events" and "Continuity"). I propose that at least some such structured fields are unified and relatively enduring actual entities with open concrescence.

To expand on the value of our unified enduring selves, we highly value and identify ourselves with many enduring states of character or dispositions, with virtues like prudence, courage, temperance, justice, faith, hope, and love. We may also highly disvalue (regret, repudiate, repent of, forgive) and refuse to identify ourselves with many enduring states of character, with vices like imprudence, cowardice, overindulgence, unfairness, faithlessness, despair, and hatred. None of these can exist only for an instant; their very conception as well as their realization require personal

endurance and positive personal identification with enduring selfhood. The intense concentration involved in significant creativity—like freeing the statue of David from the block of marble that encompasses it—requires unified personal endurance; when we value non-trivial creativity, we are valuing that endurance. Self-realization of the enduring self is axiologically significant; being a self takes time; realizing a self takes time. We desire to be integrated persons free from conflicting interests, desires, and goals; but integrated selfhood also takes a considerable amount of time. We plan ahead, develop our talents, pursue our careers, raise our children, and prepare for retirement, etc., as if doing so for *ourselves*, as well as for others. Intrinsic valuation of ourselves involves a prolonged, intense, positive axiological orientation toward our enduring futures, as well as toward our pasts and presents.

According to Robert S. Hartman, intrinsic valuation of ourselves involves fulfilling our concepts of our enduring selves, realizing our “self-images,” “self-ideals,” or “plans of life,” as they are often called. This happens only over the “long run,” never in a single actual occasion; yet, this unified enduring individuality is what really matters to us, and process thought needs to account better for this. We care deeply about our real potentialities over the long run, not just about our present actualities. Sadly, many people are so shortsighted that their “long run” is not very long, but, again, moral and spiritual growth consists largely in expanding the scope of this “long run.” Self-love and love of neighbors focus on and identify with unified *enduring* individualities and judge them to have intrinsic worth.

Finally, the very process of evaluating our enduring individualities itself takes time and is not accomplished in a momentary self-occasion. As Whitehead pointed out, thinking the thought, “United Fruit Company,” takes time, requires ongoing intentions and concentrations, and is not accomplished in an instant (*AI* 182). By the same token, the most important judgments that we make about ourselves, our cognitive self-valuations, take time—judgments like “I did a bad thing,” “I am responsible for doing a bad thing,” “I am true (or untrue) to myself,” “I love myself,” “I love you,” “I love God,” etc. No single actual occasion can think such thoughts. The cognitive aspects of valuation are very significant to us, but they are not accomplished in a tenth of a second (the conventional process assessment of the duration of an actual occasion within a human self). Being moral, being spiritual, being a good person,

fulfilling our ideal concepts of ourselves, self-realization, all take time and involve a unique field of enduring individuality, which is at the very heart of the values we cherish most dearly.

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