

## PROCESS THEORY - SYSTEMS THINKING

The philosophy of process is... (a) general theory of reality.... Its concern is with what exists in the world and with the terms of reference in which this reality is to be understood and explained...The guiding idea of its approach is that natural existence consists in and is best understood in terms of *processes* rather than *things* — of modes of change rather than fixed stabilities. For processists, change of every sort — physical, organic, psychological — is the pervasive and predominant feature of the real.

Process philosophy pivots on the thesis that the processual nature of existence is a fundamental fact with which any adequate metaphysic must come to terms.

Process philosophy puts processes at the forefront of philosophical and specifically of ontological concern. Process should here be construed in pretty much the usual way — as *a sequentially structured sequence of successive stages or phases*.

### An Evolutionary Perspective

Evolution is an emblematic and paradigmatic process for process philosophy. For not only is evolution a process that makes philosophers and philosophy possible, but it provides a clear model for how processual novelty and innovation comes into operation in nature's self-engendering and self-perpetuating scheme of things. Evolution, be it of organism or of mind, of subatomic matter or of the cosmos as a whole, reflects the pervasive role of process which philosophers of this school see as central both to the nature of our world and to the terms in which it must be understood. Change pervades nature. The passage of time leaves neither individuals nor types (species) of things statically invariant. Process at once destabilizes the world and is the cutting-edge of advance to novelty. And evolution of every level, physical, biological, and cosmic carries the burden of the work here.