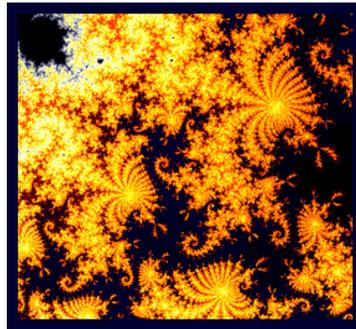


# CSEND DIALOGUE FORUM



Monday, the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2008 from 5.30 to 7.00 pm

## BEAUTY, ART, NATURE AND CHAOS



Perhaps the chief characteristic of works of art—such as in music, literature, painting, dance, and film—is a sense of "this-otherness" they evoke. That is, the artist takes the "subject" of the work beyond presentation or representation to a place of "beauty" which "*doth tease us out of thought, as doth eternity*," as Keats put it. The grand and tragic as well as the ordinary and quotidian become infused with a quality which Virginia Woolf called "*being*," photographer Paul Caponigro calls "*presence*," and Leonard Bernstein called "*expectation violations*." The "this" simultaneously converges and diverges with a subtle sense of "otherness." Arnold Schoenberg called it the discovery that "dissonance is the same as consonance": a metaphoric dynamic.

In fact, the kind of dynamic found in literary metaphors pervades works of art. Here items are juxtaposed so as to continuously compare and contrast them without resolution. A work of literature is made of interlocking metaphors operating at various levels, from "local," obvious comparisons ("those eyes are pearls") to the large-scale metaphors of Kafka's Castle. In a classic symphony, an introduced theme is "developed" so that previous versions are continuously compared and contrasted with new versions as the theme transmogrifies through pitch, rhythm, instrumentation, strategies like contrary motion and fugue. The principle of simultaneous similarity and difference operates throughout the piece to produce the sense of this-otherness.

The fractal forms generated by chaotic dynamical systems (perhaps the most ubiquitous forms in nature: clouds, mountains, the nerves in our bodies, wave patterns, forest ecologies) share both the quality of this-otherness found in art and the patterns of what fractal geometers call "self-similarity," at different scales. Chaos theory and fractals offer a new way to think about the beauty of nature and its relationship to the beauty of art. Professor John Briggs addresses these issues and suggests ways to look at the holism of both nature and works of art through the "this-otherness"/self-similar dynamic.

- **Professor John Briggs** is a distinguished Professor at Western Connecticut State University, Department of Writing, Linguistics and Creative Process. He has written many books on the Chaos theory, Art and Nature like *Trickster Tales*, *Seven Life Lessons of Chaos*, *Fire in the Crucible* among others and *Entangled Landscapes*, co-authored with poet James R. Scrimgeour

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### **Dialogue Partner/Discussant: Implications to Social Systems and Change**

**Professor Raymond Saner** is the professor for Organisation and International Management at Basle University. He would have a dialogue exchanges with Prof. Briggs after his initial presentation and explore together the applicability of Chaos theory to the understanding of social system change and process of national development.

### **Organisers:**

Prof. Lichia Yiu, the Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND)  
Prof. Beat Bürgenmeier, Political Economy Department, the University of Geneva

**Free of Charge**

**Uni-Mail, Room M S030**

More information on CSEND could be found at [www.csend.org](http://www.csend.org)

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