Bradley argues that the mathematical notion of function involves a three-fold mapping activity, thereby bringing the pragmatic component clearly to the forefront. And Palmyre Oomen discusses Whitehead's view on the laws of nature.

The volume continues with an essay by Herman de Regt who compares Bas van Fraassen's new theory of rationality with a Peircean account of belief as habit. Next, Michael Hoffman shows how Peirce's notion of diagrammatic reasoning can be used to resolve the learning paradox, comparing this solution with those of Plato, Chomsky, and Fodor. Rowland Stout examines the relation between events and processes through linguistic analysis, and he argues that speaking of events derives from speaking of processes. The volume is concluded with an essay by Guy Debrock that explores the implications of a radical pragmatic process philosophy for ethics.

It is safe to say that much more work still needs to be done before a relatively worked-out and self-contained process pragmatism comes off the ground. However, the preliminary work is accomplished in this collection of essays. For instance, it would be interesting to compare Hausman's discussion of Peirce's evolutionary cosmology with Oomen's treatment of natural laws in Whitehead, or to examine how the oft-recurring notion of habit features within process pragmatism.

A lamentable omission is that no essay is included on George Herbert Mead. In fact, Mead is mentioned only sporadically. This is regrettable because Mead can justifiably be called the father of process pragmatism. In The Philosophy of the Act and elsewhere, Mead actively seeks to combine the pragmatic insights of James, Dewey, and Peirce with the process philosophy of Whitehead and with Einstein's theory of relativity. But then, it has to be admitted, the inspiration for the current volume is drawn largely from Peirce and Whitehead, not from Mead.

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John Dewey and Moral Imagination is an excellent contribution to both Dewey scholarship and pragmatist ethics. Since Dewey's philosophical writings, there has been very little work done in the area of pragmatic ethics. Fesmire uses Dewey's pragmatism as a foundation for developing his theory of moral theorizing. One theme of Fesmire's book is that a paradigm shift in ethical theorizing from the traditional types of ethical theories based on a narrow preoccupation with rules and principles to a focus on the thought processes and moral imagination of the individual is necessary to develop a revitalized ethical theory. To achieve this paradigm shift, a revitalization of moral theory that is based on Dewey's theory of moral understanding is necessary since it is social, imaginative, and artful. Fesmire believes that it is essential to examine the psychology of moral behavior in order to develop a moral theory that is applicable to human beings and their particular situations. Rule-governed accounts of ethics cannot perform this important function since they merely focus on the extraneous features of the psychology of the person.

Fesmire focuses on three interrelated theses throughout the book. The first thesis, examined in the first three chapters, is that moral character, belief, and reasoning are inherently social, embodied, and historically situated. In Chapter 1, Fesmire distinguishes between socialized actions that are habitual and actions of reflexive morality which are mediated by intelligence. Moral character is interwoven within an individual's cultural horizon which comprises of a system of values, beliefs, and histories that define a particular community. To become morally mature, an individual must engage in an ongoing process of evaluating and reconstructing customs in light of his/her beliefs, principles and unique circumstances. The development of habits and choices that are not merely arbitrary is also an important part of moral maturation. An individual can achieve such moral maturation by transcending sociocultural interaction in order to create his/her own uniquely acquired habits.

In Chapters 2 and 3, Fesmire redescribes notions such as belief, reason, and truth. Of the three, belief and reason are the most relevant in developing a pragmatist theory of morality since moral reflection and imagination are two key features of determining how one should act from within the tangles of lived experience. Fesmire
reconstructs the nature of belief and reason so that these could be applicable to human beings in real life situations. Moral deliberation is a form of engaged inquiry touched off by an uncertain situation. All reasoning is in some sense based on prudential assessments, outcomes, and dilemma situations which cannot be separated from passion and emotion. Thus, pragmatism shows the futility of emotion-free rationality in dealing with moral situations. No human situation could be completely emotion-free since we are creatures of feeling and emotion. Thus, traditional accounts of moral theorizing cannot be relevant to the lived and embodied features of situations.

The second thesis, examined in chapters 4 and 5, is that moral deliberation is fundamentally imaginative and takes the form of dramatic rehearsal. Dramatic rehearsal is merely one function of the deliberative process since it is a process of tentative action in that the process invites an individual to “try on” one of the ends, by imagining actually doing it. The proper outcome of deliberation is decision. In dramatic rehearsal, an individual performs an imaginative reconstruction of a situation which is an imaginative process that allows the individual to bracket an action so that (s)he can accurately assess whether or not (s)he should act in the particular situation. Imagination is beneficial for individuals to intensely perceive what is before them since imagination amplifies perception. Given the complexity of human moral situations, it is essential that human beings develop their powers of imagination. Only an imaginative vision can elicit the possibilities that are interwoven within the texture of actual situations since the imagination intervenes deeply in moral life. For Fesmire, the central focus of ethical theorizing should be the imagination instead of the mere following of rules and principles that are decided upon ahead of time. Thus, dramatic rehearsal makes it possible for an individual to avoid errors of judgment when making ethical decisions.

The third thesis, examined in chapters 6 and 7, is that moral conduct is conceived on the model of aesthetic perception and artistic creation. In these last two chapters, Fesmire argues that in order to decide how to act in a particular situation, an individual must perceive or feel his/her way with a discerning imagination. Moral conduct must not always be habitual since habitual action deadens one’s perception. Ideally, moral conduct should
express the individual’s overall character rather than continuously following blind custom or impulse. A responsible action is context-specific, nuanced, and responsive to a particular situation. There are two inappropriate extremes of conduct. The first extreme involves routine ends, fixed doctrines, and ready-made principles leading to cultural rigidity, conformity, and dogmatism. The other extreme of conduct results in behavior that is unorganized, cursory, and discontinuous. Such conduct is usually unrehearsed and could result in erroneous moral judgments. Both of these extremes usually have a deadening effect on the moral imagination. Thus, what is necessary is to develop a middle course of ethical conduct which focuses on experimental intelligence that is guided neither by fixed ends nor by discontinuous conduct. Experimental intelligence is based on an intense perception of a situation and involves the development of a finely tuned imagination.

In conclusion, I found Fesmire’s book lucid, succinct, and a joy to read. The book will be of interest to a wide readership, such as ethicists, pragmatic philosophers, politicians, and educators. Fesmire’s interpretation of Dewey’s writings sheds new light on the imaginative process, human emotional makeup and expression, and the nature of moral judgment. I found Fesmire’s book to be a breath of fresh air in the vast literature on traditional ethical theorizing which can be stifling to individuals trying to become moral individuals. Fesmire strays away from traditional ethical theories and develops a pragmatic theory of moral theorizing which focuses on moral imagination and that helps an individual to continuously develop moral character and. By developing a pragmatic ethical theory, Fesmire has progressed a long way towards bringing about a Copernican revolution in ethical theorizing.

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