
Process Pragmatism is required reading for anyone interested in the future of pragmatism. The book contains eleven essays originally presented at an international colloquium on pragmatic process philosophy held in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, in May of 1999. The collection of essays centers prominently around two key figures: Alfred N. Whitehead and Charles S. Peirce. In fact, one could almost call the present volume an anthology on Whitehead and Peirce, and process pragmatism an amalgam of Peircean pragmatism and Whiteheadian process thought. Unlike the revolution that sparked pragmatism (the storm unleashed by Darwin’s Origin of Species), process pragmatism is the outcome of a quiet revolution that is still ongoing. There are no bands of process pragmatists aggressively proclaiming strong viewpoints. In fact, even in the current volume only the editor uses the phrase “process pragmatism,” and he does so mainly to give it a definition. Instead of a partisan clamor of arms, however, there is a natural affinity between pragmatism and process philosophy—an affinity that is running its own course, that is quickly becoming stronger, and that it is beginning to pay off. The eleven essays in this volume clearly testify of this.

The opening essay, by Guy Debrock, is in essence a preliminary statement of the platform of process pragmatism. As Debrock sees it, process pragmatism can be captured in three elementary propositions. Nothing is unless something happens, which he calls the principle of event. Nothing happens unless it involves interaction—the principle of interaction. And finally, nothing happens in isolation—the principle of process.

Debrock’s introduction is followed by three essays that focus on Peirce. These essays are a general discussion of the prospects of pragmatic process philosophy by Sandra Rosenthal, a discussion of Peirce’s evolutionary realism as a process philosophy by Carl Hausman, and a paper by Jaime Nubiola in which he argues that deep down the law of reason and the law of love are one and the same. Next follow three essays that focus on Whitehead. Johan Siebers develops a pragmatic process approach to self-consciousness. James
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.

Cornelis de Waal Indiana Univ.-Purdue Univ. Indianapolis