

stability (152). In this way "reader, writer, creature, ice, and landscape *are* patches that together constitute an ecology in which human expression is a key participant" (153).

Browne examines 20th century ecological writing through this pragmatist ecology. He begins with John Muir's *My First Summer in the Sierra*, and follows with John Steinbeck's *Sea of Cortez*, Rachel Carson's sea books (*Under the Sea Wind*, *The Sea Around Us*, and *The Edge of the Sea*), John Haines' *The Stars, the Snow, the Fire*, and Barry Lopez's *Arctic Dreams*. Terry Tempest Williams' *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* serves as the concluding piece and functions to pull together themes Browne teases out of the earlier texts.

For Browne, these authors "create art that is emplaced" (175) and they all "render porous the barriers that impede the art of knowing" (170). Further, for each of these writers, the setting is far more than where the action occurs; instead, the places are active participants and the authors themselves are transformed by the encounter and help us to understand "ourselves and our cultures as part of the ecological processes that sustain all life on earth" (170). With such understanding, we are better able to actively participate in those activities that sustain environmental and democratic viability.

Humans and human culture are participants within the environment and they have an ethical responsibility to recognize themselves as such. Imagination allows better insight into this connection. When we understand ourselves as *in* and *of* our environment, we take up the actual in light of the possible differently than we would if we take ourselves to be isolated. For Browne, this is the method of turning from despair to "hope, wonder, and activity" (185).

Browne's work succeeds in a number of ways. He has put together a book that is scholarly, readable, and ecotonal. By bringing together the philosophy of John Dewey and a number of environmental authors, he has created a text rich with possibilities for future development, one that invites inquiry into all elements that make us human, including those too often overlooked as belonging to a separate sphere.

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John Dewey Between Pragmatism and Constructivism. Hickman, Larry A., Stefan Neubert, and Kersten Reich, eds. New York: Fordham University Press, 2009. 276 pages, \$55.00

A marriage of Pragmatism with social constructivism seems a promising pairing, with Dewey's former colleague, George Herbert Mead, an influential go-between or matchmaker. Larry Hickman has suggested that "Dewey developed his own form of constructivism," while Dewey's call for reconstruction in philosophy and his focus on knowledge as a transactional process melds well with aspects of social construction—all share a dynamic, contingent model of knowledge and action.

But the devil is in the details, and the effort to juxtapose Dewey's classical Pragmatism with Interactive Constructivism, the thrust of *John Dewey Between Pragmatism and Constructivism*, while at times displaying the hoped-for hybrid vigor, also struggles through familiar debates over post-modernism's linguistic turn, degrees of cognitive relativism, and constructivism's frequent privileging of discourse over experience and material context.

Interactive Constructivism, a variant associated with the University of Cologne, declares its strengths as a systematic series of metaperspectives that illuminate the cognitive relativism of knowing. The metaperspectives include our roles as socially situated observers, participants, and agents; the distinctions between self-observers and distant observers; and, most crucially, the levels of discourse disguising hegemonic power relations, illusions of truth claims, and the constraints of the unconscious. Represented in this volume by Stefan Neubert and Kersten Reich, the constructivists find Dewey lacking in his alertness to issues of power, the relativism of truth claims, and experience rooted in and as conceived as a language game. As Neubert suggests, the constructivists focus on a “culturally specific position” largely defined by “a particular language, vocabulary, or language game,” a perspective more congenial to neo-Pragmatism, while Dewey--and Hickman, Larry Garrison and Ken Stickers in this volume—lean more towards the view that “we are able to get into experimental contact with a world beyond and independent of any specific language, a world of nature approached through culture” (38).

That Neubert and Reich co-direct the Cologne Dewey Center suggests the international attraction and potential of Dewey’s Pragmatism for contemporary thought. But while all participants agreed Dewey would welcome reconstruction from the supplementary insights of constructivism, the sharpest exchanges involved the degree of linguistic determinism and relativism tolerable to Deweyan Pragmatism. Or, put another way, how much warranted assertability, experimentalism and Deweyan naturalism can constructivists swallow? As Hickman suggests, “the difference between the classical Pragmatism of Dewey and interactive constructivism seems to lie in Pragmatism’s commitment to experimentalism in the strong sense, whereas interactive constructivism seems more at home with the postmodernist notions of ‘discourse’” (214).

Edited by Hickman, Neubert, and Reich, *John Dewey between Pragmatism and Constructivism* represents the fruits of cooperation between the Center for Dewey Studies at Southern Illinois University Carbondale and the Cologne Dewey Center. The contributions come in three parts: a general introduction to relevant aspects of Dewey’s work by Hickman, Reich and Neubert; closer scrutiny of potential connections between Deweyan Pragmatism and constructivism by all five authors; and an intriguing, extended, ensuing “Online Email Discussion” by the participants, which for the reader resembles sitting in on a high-level, contentious yet amicable exchange on key theoretical issues raised by the Transatlantic effort to creatively and critically juxtapose Dewey and constructivism.

Is the whole greater than the sum of the parts, that is, is the potential enrichment of Pragmatism and constructivism realized in this international dialogue? The answer may lie in a similar collection of essays, *Reconstructing Democracy, Recontextualizing Dewey: Pragmatism and Interactive Constructivism in the Twenty-first Century* (2008), edited by Jim Garrison, which offers more concrete applications of Dewey and constructivism to such issues as pluralism, participatory democracy and public education. Together, the two volumes offer lively engagement with both the theory and *praxis* of classical Pragmatism in combination with the better aspects of constructivism.

In a recent essay in *The New York Review of Books*, John Searle accuses social constructionism of “confusion, falsehood, and incoherence” in its fear of the seemingly “oppressive” concept of “an objectively existing, independent reality” (92). The accusation seems more the construction of straw men and reflects the sort of polarizing, dualistic

constructions that Dewey resisted. Reading the nuanced, informed and sympathetic discussions of Pragmatism by the constructivists Stefan Neubert and Kersten Reich in *John Dewey Between Pragmatism and Constructivism* suggests the promise of productive dialogue between classical Pragmatism and contemporary continental philosophy and what comes of melding the best of both worlds. Interactive Constructivism's attention to metaperspectives and issues of power and knowledge benefit classical Pragmatism with a post-modern styling that may make it more attractive in the larger, global conversation, while post-structuralist theorizing might benefit from Deweyan Pragmatism in helping turn its gaze from a self-conscious, deconstructing meta-discourse and introducing it to the democratic communities and material world off campus. It may make for an enduring, if contentious, post-postmodern marriage.

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The Conduct of Life. Ralph Waldo Emerson. Edited and Introduced by H.G. Callaway. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2006. 219 pages. \$29.95.

In the last few years H.G. Callaway has produced several helpful editions of some important later texts by Emerson. Emerson's *Conduct of Life* was originally published in 1860, and it has appeared in a number of editions since then, but Callaway's edition has several noteworthy features that cause it to stand out from the crowd and that make it an important contribution to Emerson studies. This is a rare volume that will serve students, academic philosophers, and casual readers alike: a critical edition of a less-familiar text that is attractive to ordinary readers without sacrificing scholarly rigor.

Callaway's intention, as he states in his Foreword, is to contextualize Emerson's thought historically and so to help readers see that Emerson is not just an essayist and idealist poet but also an important philosopher whose later thought has been neglected. Emerson's most familiar texts are probably some of his earliest, like *Nature*, "Self-Reliance", the Divinity School Address, and other early Transcendentalist texts Emerson wrote in the 1830s and 1840s. Arguably, the texts that Emerson produced in the subsequent three decades are both more mature and more philosophically important. As Callaway suggests in his Introduction, the later Emerson may have overcome his earlier Transcendentalism, at least if we understand his Transcendentalism as a reaction against materialism and its attendant political concerns. The essays in *The Conduct of Life* are, as the title suggests, concerned with the material conditions of our life and with the tug-of-war that goes on as we are pulled between them and the universal