



Critical Studies and Reviews

Michael Hauskeller, *Alfred North Whitehead zur Einführung*. (Hamburg: Junius, 1994), 199 pp. (Zur Einführung 95) [Reviewed by Roland Faber, University of Vienna, Austria].

It is true, one may rest assured, that an introduction to the widespread and intricate opus of Whitehead is impossible or at least inappropriate. The more one has conquered the often strange looking and elusive stage of Whitehead's thought, the less one may be inclined to negate this inappropriateness. Moreover, adding the special arrangements necessary to provide an appropriate translation and transformation of philosophical thought into a foreign language, we could even be convinced of an almost necessary failure of such an undertaking. We may assume, on the other hand, that, because of the specific state and the degree of knowledge and acknowledgment of Whitehead in German-speaking philosophy, theology, and other academic disciplines, surprisingly it might be easier to propose an introduction to Whitehead's thought. Although Whitehead cannot be said to be known too well in German language-speaking disciplines, one could reasonably hold that a kind of "free and open space" characterizes the German-speaking reception of Whitehead, a space free and open enough to seek other and new ways of saying what might be the worth of Whitehead within the contemporary European context.

With some other new European releases, and especially those written in German, of the last five or ten years, Hauskeller's book on Whitehead shares this "free and open space." In this atmosphere, discovering Whitehead means almost the same as freeing his thought from traditional boundaries. The more European interpretations in general, and German-speaking ones in particular, of Whitehead's work are developed, the more these traditional boundaries look like what they are and secretly have been from the beginning and ever since; namely, particular perspectives on Whitehead's thought. Moreover, the longer this development goes on, the less the traditional boundaries look like what they seemed to be but have never been; namely, *the* orthodox exegesis of Whitehead. This, at least, is one of the very important aspects of the new German-speaking reception of Whitehead's work. Hauskeller's book arguably can be seen as one of its important appropriations.

Accordingly, this book has the advantage of not being written from within the traditional Whiteheadian reception. Otherwise, we could argue, this book would not have been written as it is—short and precise, instructive and embracing, lucid and understandable. This would hold, even if one (as is the case with most readers) is not acquainted well or at all with Whitehead's thought. Yes, this is an introduction and, indeed, it works! Probably, what would not

have been possible is exactly this seemingly easy and lucid style with which Hauskeller seduces the German-speaking reader to get involved with Whitehead's thought while probing his work as a valuable and even genuine philosophical approach to perennial and contemporary philosophical questions, respectively. A book—written not for Whiteheadians (there are none in Europe, or, at least, just a handful) but for an audience, generally interested in philosophy, that likes to get a perspective on the jungle of the twentieth century's adventure in philosophy. Fittingly, Hauskeller's book is situated as the 95th volume of a series called *Zur Einführung*.

Hauskeller's arrangement of the material facilitates a proper understanding of certain novelties of Whitehead's inventive work. First, introducing the reader to the general properties of Whitehead's approach to philosophy as a speculative and systematic effort, discovering it to be a problem of language and "imaginative generalization," he finally uncovers it to own a sensible balance between an (eventually failing) anthropomorphism of nature and an (ever threatening) naturalization of the distinctive human (7-30). In what follows, as the main body of Hauskeller's introduction to Whitehead's thought, he offers an arrangement of major dualities that might structure best Whitehead's specially fruitful and new access to old and rather steady philosophical problems; namely, the dualities of subject/object (31-78), being/becoming (79-112), freedom/necessity (113-138), and fact/value (139-166). Hauskeller solidly instructs the reader as to how these oppositions gain unification in Whitehead's thought, thus opening new opportunities to genuine philosophical problems.

Of the many aspects worthwhile to discover in this book, one issue may be (more arbitrarily than deliberately) underscored: the problem of freedom. In disclosing the alternatives for decision which constitute the becoming of an actuality, Hauskeller presents with rare clarity what might be named, as he calls it, the utmost "rationalization" of the idea of freedom (122). There is, on the one hand, the tendency of the past (real possibilities) to be reproduced within the present becoming of an actuality, and there is the tendency of God's gift of the best possible (and yet unrealized) potencies for the most intense fulfillment of its becoming, on the other. But what, in this context, does it mean to say that the actuality, in its process of deciding, is exactly free in *mutating* its aim when, at the same time, there are no radically free possibilities other than one's own past's possibilities or those God offers? Where is freedom left if "non-relevant possibilities" are no choice at all? What alternatives are really possible in such a situation? For Hauskeller, Whitehead's utmost rationalization of freedom will lead us to answer precisely just this: *either* an actuality, in deciding itself freely, falls back behind its new possibilities (which God preserves) and, therefore, falls back into its own past, *or* the actuality's decision follows, in its moment, novelty as much as possible. In the first instance, it degrades towards a repercussion of repetition; in the second, by means of God's offer, it aims at uniquely arranged and organized possibilities for this decision. For Hauskeller,

in this paradoxical way, the relation between reason and freedom, the ontological principle and the irrationality of freedom, is elegantly solved: no freedom is without reason, each act of freedom can be charged, *but* no reason reaches the nucleus of subjectivity. There remains a radical irrationality of freedom, *although* subjective freedom has no arbitrary or random possibility to realize itself beyond the borders of its own past or God's ordered offering of novelty. (Crudely said, no stone-event can decide to mutate into a note of Schubert's Trout Quintet.)

Altogether, with its main interest in the consistency and even beauty of Whitehead's thought and its cautious developing of its own perspectives, but also with its spare use of critique, we can fittingly highlight the special features of this book. Nevertheless, we may ask if some differentiation of phases within Whitehead's thought and the discussion of the last decades on this issue would not reveal a rather different account of freedom or other problems and their consistency in Whitehead's philosophy. For instance, his "non-relevant" potentialities, which have been excluded as "radicals," could then be interpreted rather as "emerging" potentialities, induced as yet unrealized within the nexus of all actualities as it historically develops (as through hybrid feelings), provided by the body of the world and not just by God. Thus, not-yet-realized possibilities would be offered and would even originate within the real process of this world-nexus—tantamount with a third way open to freedom. However, the bright side of Hauskeller's approach to Whitehead is not the developmental complexity of Whitehead's philosophical journey but introduction by simplification—and truly this is an accomplishment.

Elmar Busch. *Viele Subjekte, eine Person: Das Gehirn im Blickwinkel der Ereignisphilosophie A. N. Whitehead.* (Wilzburg: Konighausen & Neumann, 1993), 214 pp. (Epistemata. Wiirzburger wissenschaftliche Schriften, Reihe Philosophie 133) [Reviewed by Roland Faber, University of Vienna, Austria].

One of the most interesting of the recent approaches to Whitehead, especially, but by no means solely, in a German-speaking context, can be seen in this book. In great efforts toward clarity, Busch's encounter with Whitehead is rich in detail and rigorous in structure. Offering in the first two parts a short but sufficient presentation of Whitehead's philosophy, the main interest of the third part is to find the internal connection between the philosophical, psychological, and specifically, the physiological branches of his thought. The last section, then, develops the physiology that Whitehead offered particularity in *Process and Reality*, thereby focusing on the brain, its function, importance, and interpretation in a process perspective.

First, a short chapter on the strategy of Whiteheadian argumentation introduces Whitehead's method by summarizing the introductory remarks of