

Minor complaints could be made about his presentation. There is considerable repetition, but that can be good pedagogy. A missing voice in the autonomy of ethics debate is that of the evolutionists who are increasingly investigating the evolution of morality; but considering the broad scope of Meyer's work, that can be left to the future. This important book should be required reading in the fields of theological and philosophical ethics, and for theologians in general.

MICHEL WEBER AND WILL DESMOND, EDS. *HANDBOOK OF WHITEHEADIAN PROCESS THOUGHT*. 2 VOLS. FRANKFURT: ONTOS VERLAG, 2008) [REVIEWED BY ROLAND FABER, CLAREMONT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND CLAREMONT GRADUATE UNIVERSITY, 1325 N COLLEGE AVE, CLAREMONT, CA-91711, USA.]

This handbook is a colossal endeavor that collects articles of many well known as well as younger process thinkers. Its well-informed contributions present the reader with a good overview of current Whiteheadian scholarship by structuring its subject into two parts, divided into two volumes. Volume one encompasses thematic entries on process thought under various disciplines—aesthetics, anthropology, ecology, economy, education, ethics, history, metaphysics, psychology and philosophy of mind, public policy and natural law, sociology of science, theology and religion, theory of knowledge, and urbanism and architecture. Volume two encompasses entries on language, mathematics and logic, the sciences, Whitehead's contemporaries, and a short history of Whitehead scholarship. However, the *opus* does not presuppose any systematic or hierarchical order of disciplines or themes, but presents itself as a collection of thematic areas of interest for process thinkers. This creates some ambivalence as to whether the structure of the whole project follows any insight or is itself a historically grown contingency.

The first ambivalence worth mentioning is the sheer scope of the endeavor: to follow the traces of process thought through a variety of disciplines and themes represented by the diversity of entries. It seems to presuppose a fruitful and widespread discourse on Whitehead in these areas, but it could also signal that a few people, despite the thrift of their disciplines and their major discourses today, prefer a minority position in emulating Whiteheadian thought. The choices of the disciplines would then be best understood in one of two ways: either as a representation of the *de facto* influence of Whitehead's thought in these areas of concern or, alternatively, as an account of how these disciplines could benefit from

the adoption of Whiteheadian modes of thought. If the handbook lends itself more to the second kind of reading, it might be said to draw on a thoroughgoing theme of neglect of process perspectives in these disciplines. This would indicate that what has energized its existence is but a minority report on a wished for, yet negated, Whiteheadian influence in these disciplines.

Admittedly, such an approach makes this handbook special. It is driven not by the historical impetus to report the merits of widespread Whitehead research in the diverse areas of academic discourse it addresses, mixed with some current pressing matters of concern, but by the desire for a conceptual alternative in these disciplines. More precisely, this handbook might present us with a vision of how these disciplines might look if they were influenced by Whiteheadian scholarship and process applications or if the public discourses on these issues were, in fact, modeled after its vision.

Do we, however, find such a Whiteheadian vision in this handbook? Maybe—and this is the next ambivalence—what we see in front of us in these two volumes is more a vision of a vision. It does not so much envision Whitehead's work by representing current research on Whitehead and his actual importance for the diverse areas it collects (at least not as its core impulse), but it envisions what these disciplines would be like in a process view of things. What such a discussion would be, however, is not worked out. Generally speaking, the handbook is not so much a reflection of, or investigation into, Whitehead research in its current happening and regarding its own urgency; rather, it is a collection of a plurality of voices of Whiteheadian process thought that hopes by its own appearance to conjure up a critical mass that could facilitate a possible shift toward a process paradigm in the disciplines and matters of concern it covers.

In this regard, it remains ambivalent what this new handbook in Whiteheadian process thought is meant to achieve. If it were meant to represent an overview of the effect of Whitehead's thought in a wide variety of contemporary disciplines, the reader must be advised that it is neither a book on Whitehead's philosophy in its own disciplinary complexity nor a systematic introduction to current process thought in its diversity of implications and applications. Despite its wide scope, it is rather a collection of interesting themes playing on an assumed identity of process thought that, nonetheless, is not further reflected on in this collection. It almost appears as the representation of a network of devoted process enthusiasts that situates itself between Whitehead's thought and a

process tradition that has gathered itself after Whitehead around certain basic paradigms.

This does not reduce the quality of the researchers, philosophers, scientists, thinkers, activists, and *aficionados* of Whitehead and Whiteheadian process thought summoned to contribute to this handbook. On the contrary, this handbook is a good mirror of highly qualified individuals and networks of individuals that, in their areas and in conversation with one another over the last years or decades, have their good standing and reasons to be respected when they voice Whiteheadian concerns or summarize their understanding of a vision for their areas of concern based on a Whiteheadian process worldview. The ambivalence throughout the collection of persons and networks of persons is, however, that it might seem to indicate that it represents ongoing Whitehead research or the variety of process thought related to it while, in fact, it rather represents these individuals and networks of individuals in their grown relationship presumably to one another and to the editors.

We might ask why most important developments of historical interest and scope—as represented, for instance, in the work of Gilles Deleuze, Bruno Latour, Isabel Stengers, Stephen Shaviro, Keith Robinson, James Williams, or Michael Halewood, to name only a few—are entirely missing, as if they did not exist. Why are areas of literature and poetics (not only language), of sociology (not only sociology of sciences) and politics (not only public policy), of an ecological culture of the future, of an ethics of nonviolence, of brain research or spirituality, of interreligious and transreligious processes, of intercultural encounters and the question of justice not even reported missing? Whitehead's cosmology is a non-dogmatic, empirical approach that lives with adaptations and revisions; why then is it not discussed in relation to metaphysical questions raised by current physics, rather than solely in connection with Einsteinian relativity theory? Why is the mathematical Whitehead with his peculiar mereological and topological approach to the fundamental role of geometry not discussed in relation to current mathematical theories of set theory and their enormous influence in philosophy and politics as, for instance, initiated by the work of Alan Badiou? Why does this collection, without further reflection, fail to indicate the special importance of process theology for the very existence of Whiteheadian traditions *per se* (by just assuming it to be one more theme) and by persistently excluding the contemporary developments in current process theologies that, in a good Whiteheadian

manner, go beyond its classical boundaries, discovering new lands, such as theopolitical, theopoetical, and multireligious perspectives? The selectivity of this handbook is not pragmatic, however. Instead, with its undisclosed criteria of selection it simply covers its exclusions and thereby distorts many of the current impulses in Whiteheadian discourse that might be vital to the future of process thought.

In summary, this new handbook in Whiteheadian process thought is an advance, a success, and a failure. Its advance lies in the sheer power of connectivity with which Whiteheadian process thinkers in different fields of interest and concern are collected, connected, and, thereby, allowed to generate an impressive array of subjects Whiteheadian scholars are interested in, should be interested in, or must be interested in if we are to deal with pressing intellectual problems and matters of concern for our living together; thus, this book can be seen as the initial data for a concrescence we, as readers, have to manage to establish creatively by leaving the book's limitations behind. It is a success, because it manages to give us, the interested readers, a good overview of classical positions in the current Whiteheadian community and occasionally even advancing beyond them. It allows Whitehead scholars to establish a measure of Whiteheadian process thought in relation to which Whitehead research and future developments might find their differences and resonances.

Finally, the handbook is a failure insofar as it seduces the reader to expect it to lead into the most current concerns that might draw us to Whitehead and related modes of process thought. Instead, this handbook leaves the reader puzzled as to exactly why that which it collects—beyond being an integrative experience for Whiteheadians—is of concern today in a world of cultural and religious bifurcations, of desires for peace in war-ridden times, without balance between ecology and technology, and in desperate need of ecological and social justice. We have to react to this world with current resources and with as creative minds as possible. I think Whitehead is such a mind, but his work is much more creative, current, and relevant than the handbook as a whole suggests.

ZHIHE WANG, GUIHUAN HUO, AND PING REN, Eds. *PROCESS STUDIES IN CHINA* (II). BEIJING: CHINA SOCIAL SCIENCES PRESS, 2007: 312 PAGES. [REVIEWED BY HUI DONG, SCHOOL OF MARXIST STUDIES, HUAZHONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, WUHAN, CHINA, 430074.]

This volume is comprised of twenty-one articles written by prominent Chinese and American scholars, such as Zhihe Wang, Guihuan Huo, John