

## EDITORIAL FOREWORD

To see the term 'pragmatism' set alongside 'realism' and 'transcendental' in the title of this new work by Sami Pihlström should arouse surprise and curiosity. Did not pragmatism set out in its crusade to transform philosophy by offering an alternative to rival movements wearing the labels of 'realism' and 'transcendentalism'? In the twentieth century, realists proclaimed their faith in a mind-independent reality and a correspondence theory of truth, and transcendental idealists countered by holding that mind and thought embrace all reality and truth. The classical pragmatists sought a new perspective, as Pihlström well understands, that challenged the traditional philosophical categories that forged the realism/idealism standoff. One wonders how Charles Peirce, William James, or John Dewey would have reacted to Pihlström's title; bemusement, perhaps, and maybe some irritation.

But Pihlström stands at the start of the twenty-first century, the beneficiary of the long span of philosophy since the early pragmatists, in its varied analytic, continental, and pragmatic forms. The parameters of more recent philosophical debate have dramatically altered, and the notion of a 'transcendental' defense of the sort of moral realism that pragmatism could and should endorse will no longer arouse smiles. Analytic philosophers like John McDowell study Hegel, Kantians and Wittgensteinians fruitfully compare views, Arendt and Levinas are carefully studied everywhere, and pragmatists like Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam are sympathetic with a variety of themes long pursued by analytic or continental philosophers. All these philosophers and many more appear in this book's pages; Pihlström has carefully analysed and assembled powerful arguments from numerous sources to persuasively support a pragmatic moral realism that, I believe, would have impressed classical pragmatists.

More importantly, Pihlström shows us a viable path for the future, towards a powerful ethical theory that, I believe, accomplishes what pragmatism always attempts: the breaking down of outmoded categories and traditional dichotomies. Pihlström's pragmatic moral realism challenges adherents of both excessively naturalistic moral realisms and excessively rationalistic moral realisms; and it also challenges the standoff between moral cognitivism and moral non-cognitivism. Not only pragmatists but all moral theorists will benefit from carefully studying Pihlström's arguments.

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