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PRAGMATIST PERSPECTIVES

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Preface

This volume collects together the papers presented at the First Nordic Pragmatism Conference, *Pragmatism in Science, Religion, and Politics*, organized in Helsinki jointly by the Nordic Pragmatism Network, the Philosophical Society of Finland, the Department of Philosophy at the University of Helsinki, and the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy at the University of Jyväskylä, on June 2–4, 2008. The topic of the conference was broad, and so is the scope of this volume. The diversity of the papers reflects the richness of contemporary pragmatism scholarship, and hopefully demonstrates the viability of this philosophical approach, as well as the depth of the issues that pragmatists – early and late – have been concerned with.

The Nordic Pragmatism Network emerged from Jón Ólafsson's and Sami Pihlström's discussions within a three-year Nordic research project, "Rearticulations of Reason", which was led by Professor Leila Haaparanta and organized workshops in all the five Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, and Finland) in 2004–2006. Gradually the decision was made to organize the first pragmatism conference ever held in the Nordic countries in Finland. (The previous summer, Helsinki had already hosted an international conference on Charles S. Peirce's philosophy, *Applying Peirce*, which was organized by the Helsinki Peirce Research Centre.) With the help of the Philosophical Society of Finland, it was easy to arrange the conference venue at Tieteiden talo (House of Sciences and Letters) in Helsinki. Henrik Rydenfelt acted as the Conference Secretary and as the Coordinator of the entire Network.

The Nordic Pragmatism Network has until recently been a very loose organization with no formal structure at all. However, in the business meeting at the Helsinki conference, it was decided that the Network should have a Board, as well as a website of its own. Information about Nordic pragmatism activities can now be found at the Network's website: www.nordprag.org. With funding from the Joint Committee for Nordic Research Councils for the Humanities and the Social Sciences

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(NOS-HS) received after the conference, the Network has organized further international meetings, starting with two exploratory workshops on pragmatism, taking place in Jyväskylä, Finland (December, 2008) and Trondheim, Norway (May, 2009), as well as the Second Nordic Pragmatism Conference in Reykjavík, Iceland (August, 2009).

The pragmatist tradition was initiated in the United States in late nineteenth century, and most of serious pragmatism scholarship up to now has obviously been written in North America. However, Europeans are increasingly active in the international community of pragmatism scholars. One of the closest cooperation partners of the Nordic Pragmatism Network is the Central European Pragmatist Forum, in which Sami Pihlström has also been actively involved. It has, since 2000, organized meetings in several (Eastern) Central European countries – Slovakia, Poland, Germany, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Its co-founders, John Ryder and Emil Višňovský, were also present at the Helsinki conference and are among the contributors to this volume. There are also other pragmatism groups in Europe, for instance in Italy, Spain and the Netherlands, and it will be a challenge for Nordic pragmatists to further integrate European collaboration in this field.

The first Nordic Pragmatism Conference was made possible by financial support from the Finnish government (granted by the Finnish Council of Learned Societies), the Emil Aaltonen Foundation, and the American-Scandinavian Foundation. The Chancellor of the University of Helsinki, Professor Ilkka Niiniluoto, kindly hosted a reception for the conference participants; he also strongly supported the conference – as well as Nordic pragmatism research more generally – in his role as the President of the Philosophical Society of Finland. We also warmly acknowledge the help we received from Dr. Risto Vilkkö, the Secretary and Treasurer of the Society, who assisted us with financial matters; Mr. Jukka Nikulainen, who not only designed the conference poster and programme but also helped in several practical matters at the conference venue; Mr. Lassi Jakola who assisted with registrations; and Mrs. Auli Kaipainen, whose contribution was essential in the technical production of this volume. The conference was also part of the international activities of the research project, “The Ethical Grounds of Metaphysics” (2008–2011), which is led by Sami Pihlström at the University of Jyväskylä, and funded by the Academy of Finland.

We wish the readers philosophically rewarding moments of pragmatist thought.

Helsinki, October 2009

The Editors