



Quantum Mechanics and the Philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead (American Philosophy)

Michael Epperson

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In *Process and Reality* and other works, Alfred North Whitehead struggled to come to terms with the impact the new science of quantum mechanics would have on his metaphysics. This ambitious book is the first extended analysis of the intricate relationships between quantum mechanics and Whitehead's philosophical cosmology.

Moving systematically--concept by concept, phase by phase--Michael Epperson illuminates the intersection of science and philosophy in Whitehead's work, and details Whitehead's attempt to fashion an ontology capable of coherently accommodating the current and future trajectory of modern physics.

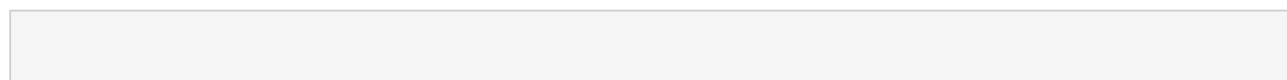
But going far beyond this exploration, Epperson also makes important new contributions to the conceptualization of Whitehead's theory of quantum events ('actual occasions'), addressing the considerable attention paid by philosophers and other scholars to Nature's fundamentally quantum character as described by modern physics.

"Quantum mechanics is one of the empirically best confirmed physical theories ever. Moreover, it has been and still is an important instrument in planning and evaluating new experiments in many areas of physics and an indispensable tool for the development of new technologies. However, despite its extremely wide and successful range of application, some important questions concerning its proper interpretation are still not settled. In this context one of the most important questions is clearly to which ontology quantum mechanics gives rise, i.e., of what kinds of fundamental entities the world probably consists (e.g. particles, fields, events, processes, spacetime regions/points, etc.), if one assumes that quantum mechanics is telling us a true story about the world.

"Epperson has done a wonderful job in showing what one of the most detailed (and surely, one of the most difficult) metaphysical theories of the 20th century--Whitehead's philosophy of process--contributes to the ongoing debate about the proper ontological interpretation of quantum mechanics. Therefore, the book is highly recommended to anybody working on or being seriously interested in the ontology of quantum physics. Moreover, it is a "must read" for students of Whitehead's philosophy, since it will deepen their understanding of Whitehead's quite abstract scheme, to see quantum mechanics as a specific exemplification of some of the central structures of the philosophy of process."

Frank Hättich - *Studies in History and Philosophy of Modern Physics*

Including a nonspecialist introduction to quantum mechanics, Epperson adds an essential new dimension to our understanding of the architecture and meaning of Whitehead's metaphysics--and of the constantly enriching encounter between science and philosophy in our century.



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