In this cosmopolitan treatment of the philosophies of the world, a complex methodology is deployed, which permits comparisons and contrasts of the main theories. An outstanding feature of the book is its comparative discussions of the major religions and of oriental philosophies, in parallel with the classical Western philosophers. One of many questions which this framework opens up for study is the place which American thought holds in the overall world scene, a question which is not often posed. My remarks will consider only this theme; perhaps they will suggest, by analogy, the cornucopia of contrasts and comparisons made in other parts of the text.

The methodology adopted for these studies has its origins with Richard McKeon, and has been further developed by Walter Watson and David Dilworth; he turns the focus toward four paradigmatic philosophical outlooks having "archic profiles" which are pure, in the sense of maximum internal compatibility. Other philosophical positions are considered in their relationship to these four ideal profiles (which will be introduced below with upper case letter); those closest to one of the four pure profiles are preferred, by and large, and are taken to be richer, more general in scope, more solid in content and coherence.

In classical American philosophy, the ARISTOTELIAN profile is highly influential. Its problematic or synoptic methodology is found in Peirce, James, Dewey, Mead, and Buchler. In particular, Peirce and Dewey each differ from the pure profile only in one archic variable. The central strain of American philosophy, in Dilworth's opinion, can be located in the synoptic method and creative principles found in James, Dewey, and Buchler. On either side of this philosophical mainstream lie Peirce and Santayana, both of whom he takes to be the more profound thinkers. Santayana's profile is a pure version of the DEMOCRITIAN. The more recent school of analytic philosophy, in this analysis, also follows Democritus, except for a radically different sense of reality, which abandons the substrative view of strong materialism and instead follows Hume in adopting an existential or experiential ontology. This existential sense of reality belongs to the SOPHIST paradigm, as do creative principles and agonistic method, so that various sophist elements play an important part in the American school. James, for instance, falls into the sophist paradigm, apart from his synoptic pragmatic method.

The fourth pure profile is that of PLATONISM, and it is interesting to note how little this is represented in the American tradition. Royce has the Hegelian profile, which means he is balanced equally between Plato and Aristotle. He adopts the
dialectic method of Plato, but few others do so; and no prominent American philosopher has either the noumenal sense of reality or the comprehensive principle found in Plato.

But does each philosopher in fact have a determinate profile according to these categories? Dilworth takes the answer to be "yes," not for a priori reasons, but because his analyses have uniformly led him to this conclusion. The determination is meant to yield an essential career philosophy, as distinct from other less fundamental tendencies which might be found. For my part, I find that the classifications fit much better in some cases than in others. That Peirce holds an essentialist sense of reality, and Santayana a substrative one, seems evident enough. But is Peirce's perspective really objective, rather than disciplinary? The objective perspective is signaled by his attachment to science; however, it is not easy to refuse him the disciplinary perspective assigned to Aristotle and to Kant. I am open to persuasion on this point, but am inclined to think that in some cases, the philosopher falls between two of the stools arranged for him or her to sit on.

Since the book is acknowledged to be written from an essentialist viewpoint, it might be argued that the above reservation stems entirely from an incompatible sense of reality, and is not properly applied here. I think not; even from the essentialist point of view, it may be the case that a further refinement of categories is called for, if there are deficiencies and incompletenesses in the system as given.

However, my critique in fact is grounded in a substrative sense of reality, so that I would not look for any system of categories to be definitive, or exhaustive, or perfectly adapted to the analysis of past philosophy. Nevertheless, the merits of an approach this general are many. It does not countenance the study of Aristotle as if her were a linguist philosopher, of Plato as if he were a mathematical logician, or of all philosophers as if they were transcendental idealists. Nor does it accept arguments which are so rooted in one particular standpoint so as to be idle when considered from the perspective of the others. Indeed, argument is not the main point here. What is required is a good analysis of the presuppositions and foundations of the various philosophical positions, leaving justifications to the advocates. A pluralism or relativism might seem appropriate to such an endeavor. However, Dilworth seeks to avoid neutrality of this kind, appealing to the four pure profiles to restore some normative balance to his investigations.

There is considerable power in schema with the generality here exhibited. Philosophers owe it to themselves to explore these categories to find any with which they are comfortable.

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