provides a useful review of the Frankfurt school's late appreciation of Dewey. While Posnock's criticism of James's notion of "pure experience" has some validity, it ignores James's commitment in the Essays in Radical Empiricism to the "loose appendices" and "imperfect intimacy" of the empiricist universe.

Posnock is intelligent and learned. In addition to the topics discussed, The Trial of Curiosity contains chapters on Henry James's autobiography and his novel The Ambassadors, and on James, Santayana and Howard Sturgis. Although at times The Trial of Curiosity appears to be a set of texts and subjects in search of a unifying theme, the heart of the book—roughly its first half—is a significant contribution to the ongoing recontextualization and reevaluation of American philosophy.

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What can a philosopher who has already published fifty-seven books do to maintain his reputation in the field? Princeton Press has proudly published the first of three volumes hinted as being Nicholas Rescher's magnum opus, a systematic amplification of the thought of one of America's most distinguished philosophers. This first volume of A System of Pragmatic Idealism treats issues of epistemology, philosophy of science, and philosophy of nature.

Rescher's writing style and argument is clear and straightforward. The accessible style helps the author avoid the unfortunate tendency of philosophers both ancient and modern to speak past one-another on issues such as those concerning realism and idealism. Rescher's version of idealism, which is called "conceptual idealism", is of the epistemological sort; it is coordinated with a coherence theory of truth and with the theses of "interactionism" and "axiological conventionalism". However, it is also of an irenic character, making significant concessions to metaphysical realism.

The development of this irenic idealism affords fine insights into the history of philosophy and the European and American sources of influence upon Rescher's thought. Bradley and Peirce are rewarded with the most attention along with Kant, Hume, and Hegel. Hume is present because his thought like Rescher's remains in constant dialogue with the skeptic and the dogmatist. Kant is there in discussions of the phenomena/noumena distinction, although Rescher bases his warrant for the distinction on a pragmatic or "functional" rather than either an a priori transcendental or an empirical ground (p. 259 and 264).
Rescher emphasizes the importance of the "Hegelian Inversion", the reversal of the implication relationship from 'What is acceptable as true is therefore systematizable', to 'What is systematizable is therefore acceptable as true'. On the basis of this inversion "it becomes reasonable --and if not actually inevitable, then at any rate only natural-- to construe the parameters of systematicity as themselves affording acceptability indicators" (p. 142). Unable to build our house from the ground up with all the building blocks and plans first assembled, we must instead judge claims to truth "in terms of the merit of the method that produces them", assessing this merit "by both internal (coherentist) and external (pragmatist) standards" (p. 143).

Bradley is welcomed as the one who first displayed the implication of the Hegelian Inversion and used them as a basis for critique of traditional foundationalist and correspondentist epistemology. "The coherence theory ... implements F. H. Bradley's dictum that system (i.e. systematicity) provides a test criterion most appropriately fitted to serve as arbiter of truth" (p. 159). Long before cognitive values became a focal point for discussion, Rescher had elucidated a novel account of them as the "parameters of systematicity". He here makes perhaps his best case for the view that the "standards of plausibility and presumption are, for the coherentist, provided by the very conception of systematicity itself" (p. 146).

Finally, Peirce and his idea of the "ideal" scientific community is both friend and foe in Rescher's account. Rescher distinguishes between ideals such as the "completeness" of knowledge, and goals. While even unrealizable ideals may have a place in science, one must not confuse untenable epistemic ideals such as theory-convergence or the completeness of knowledge with the theoretical and practical goal structure of science or other practices. Ideal science "is emphatically not something towards which we are moving along the asymptotic and approximative line envisaged by Peirce" (p. 213); for Peirce's line runs together ideal science and science-in-the-limit, offering in effect to guarantee that completed science would satisfy the requirements of perfected science. The potential gap Rescher argues is present here was closed by Peirce only by substantive metaphysics of a problematic sort.

Still, Peirce and C. I. Lewis are applauded for providing many of the reconciling factors that allow us to overcome the tension between two basic sources of a pragmatist epistemology: our fallibilism --the recognition of the fragility and defeasibility of knowledge, and the basic human cry 'we must know!' --the recognition that we do have a good deal of collective knowledge and that our preservation depends upon it (p. 34). There is a strongly evolutionary character to some of Rescher's responses to dogmatists and skeptics, as he emphasizes the "erotetic" ("question-answer oriented") and the "eliminative"
("best-available answer seeking") characteristics of our inductive methods and propensities. But Rescher insists upon a sustainable difference here between abductive jumps with respect to methods and similar moves with respect to theses; he argues provocatively that "...a satisfactory evolutionary pragmatism must be predicated upon the shift from a Darwinism of theses to a Darwinism of methods" (p. 236).

All of us who have been enamored with Rescher's genius and his accomplishments will be eager for Volume II of Rescher's magnum, entitled The Validity of Values, and Volume III, Metaphilosophical Inquiries. I suspect we won't have long to wait!

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In his newest meditation on Henry Thoreau, Frederick Garber examines Thoreau's almost insistently oxymoronic or contradictory views on the nature of language, the nature of nature, and his relation to both. Garber sees Thoreau as engaging in a "rhetoric of self-correction" (25) which not only entertains opposing views but is driven by a calculated resistance to binary forms and so remains open-ended and indeterminate, characterized by deliberately sustained contradictions and paradoxes. "We have to read Thoreau with an ear for the incongruous" (43), Garber claims; and what we will find is not a canon crippled by its unresolved contradictions (as Richard Bridgman found in Dark Thoreau), "but a searching out of such states in order to find shapes to control ambivalence" (64).

According to Garber, Thoreau found a shape for containing his ambivalence and for directing his search in the form of an implicit myth or "fable," traceable throughout his writings, amounting to a kind of "quest" for some sufficient means of being "at home" in the world. Garber's tracing of this fable is, in turn, the organizing force of his own study. Garber begins by examining Thoreau's ambivalence toward the status of writing itself—alternately celebrating the primacy of words ("A word is wiser than any man") and conceding their "inescapable secondariness" (18) to experience, to being. Thoreau entertains both views, and Garber warns that "his reading of the nature of language has...to be described as decidedly oxymoronic" (18-19). One dimension of Thoreau's "quest" is "for the ultimate word and the sentence that can say it all," and this, Garber claims, is "finally a quest for home" (23). Inscription, in its largest sense—including not only writing but such diverse means of marking one's presence in the world as digging a cellar, plowing a field, or leaving a brick on a mountaintop—is a means of discovering or asserting one's place in the world. Thoreau's