aesthetics are one by erecting the aesthetic as the proper ethical ideal, the preferred model and criterion of assessment for the good life (237)," and extends it "... to the public realm, to questions of what a good society should be like (238)." In doing so he focuses on Rorty, who does not think the private and the public can be fused into one quest, Shusterman argues -- rightly, I maintain -- that "at the very least ... a good society must be such as to insure the possibility, if not the productive fostering, of an esthetically satisfying life for its constituent individuals (238)."

Such an "aestheticization of the ethical," the author believes, is a dominant current in our postmodern age, but it is not without historical precedent, for as early as Plato (as he point out in a footnote, 304, n. 8) the composite term kai-agathon ("beautiful and good") was employed, and kalos was used as often as agathos to denote moral goodness. (I would add that even ordinary usage sometimes calls a good person "beautiful," and wisely so.) Although "Rorty may be right about the impossibility of a satisfactory synthesis (255)" of private ethics and social ethics, Shusterman correctly challenges this claim "as the misguided product of our deeply entrenched liberal ideology and Romantic aesthetics (255)." To me, at least, the future looks bleak indeed if we can not enlarge the "cult" of the (individual) body beautiful to include the body politic and social. The author is correct in concluding that the shape of such a synthesis is at present difficult to envisage, but liberating our concept of art from its bondage to avant-garde individualism would seem a propitious preparation for its exploration.

I hope that someday Shusterman will devote an entire book to this synthesis. In doing so, as he himself points out, it "will be seen that our individual, free, personal choices of lifestyles can not hide that they are severely constrained and relentlessly programmed by societal forces that are usually far beyond ... [our] power as individuals to resist, let alone control (257)." (I suggest that the author -- to see this even more clearly -- consult the theory of society as usages or binding observances of José Ortega y Gasset, as expressed in his Man and People. He will find, I think, interesting parallels between facets of Ortega's general position and that of Dewey, as I have pointed out elsewhere.) In the meantime, I join my voice to that of Arthur Danto -- as printed on the back cover -- in saying that this work is one that "no one interested in philosophy of art -- or philosophy of life -- can afford to ignore."

Anton Donoso

University of Detroit Mercy


This is an admirably clear and informative study. Stack, professor and chairman of philosophy at SUNY Brockport, and
author of previous studies on Kierkegaard's Existential Ethics (1977) and Lange and Nietzsche (1983), shows that what have been thought to be uniquely Nietzschean themes—an existential conception of history, a "will to power," the relation between fate and freedom, the paradox of good and evil, "joyful science," aristocratic radicalism, and the idea of "beyond-man," among others—are traceable directly to Emersonian influences.

Nietzsche read Emerson—in fact, "heavily underlined" and annotated some of his works. The relationship between the two philosophers and literary figures was more than simple parallelism. At times Nietzsche seems to follow closely even "Emerson's most causal suggestions" (p. 188), though, Stack acknowledges, "Nietzsche lucidly articulated what was implicit in Emerson's essays in a more dramatic and detailed way" (p. 197). "Nietzsche was a kind of ultraradical Emersonian who transcended this standpoint in scope and depth and by dint of his philosophical acuity" (p. 274). Stack finds it ironic that American literary critics sometimes have used Nietzsche to explain Emerson, when "it is Emerson's insights and conceptions that are accentuated and intensified in the philosophy of Nietzsche" (p. 248).

Even so, it is not Stack's claim that Nietzsche was just an Emersonian. Nietzsche was influenced as well by the philosopher and political economist Eugen Duhring and the historian F. A. Lange (see p. 64, n. 6), as well as, according to his own acknowledgement, by Schopenhauer (though Stack argues that Nietzsche was the better philosopher) and his friendship with Richard Wagner (which later cooled). "Nietzsche's absorption of so many of Emerson's insights, ideas, and values" probably was not conscious and deliberate, but was "an unconscious process of assimilation stimulated by [recognizing] his own inner thoughts" (p. 116). Stack thinks that Emerson would have understood this; Emerson said, "in every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts" (p. 116). Stack is not an uncritical expositor of either Nietzsche or Emerson. About a "will to power" and "aristocratic radicalism," he notes that neither philosopher seemed aware of the possibility that such concepts and practices in the wrong hands could lead to disaster (see, for example, p. 280).

Stack's claims for Emerson's influence on Nietzsche are not modest. (See p. 77 for examples of the influence.) But even more, Emerson can be said to have a relationship to, if not a direct influence on, Heidegger ("a hidden presence," p. 137), Sartre ("not far removed," p. 180), existentialism (p. 200), Freud (again, "a hidden presence," p. 243), and--perhaps of more interest to SAAP members--American pragmatism and John Dewey (pp. 22, 69, 189, 285, 300). I am struck by the similarities between some Emersonian themes and ideas and John Dewey's thought. (For Dewey's appreciation of Emerson as a philosopher, see The Middle Works, Vol. 3 (SIU Press, 1977), pp. 184-192.) These extended relationships (or influences) should provide Stack and other scholars with plenty of work for the next few years.
Stack's knowledge of Nietzsche and Emerson is deep and thorough, and his explanation and interpretation makes Nietzsche especially accessible and, at least for me, more acceptable. Nietzsche turns out to be deeply radical, but no "wild man." Stack's study is a model of philosophical interpretation (which I will use to show students how to draw causal and interpretative connections). There is some (though not much) awkward phrasing, and sometimes it is difficult, without much backtracking, to determine if Nietzsche or Emerson is the antecedent for a pronoun. The book is remarkably free of publisher's and printer's blemishes. Stack has produced an interesting, insightful, and persuasive account of the influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson on Friedrich Nietzsche.

University of Florida

Robert R. Sherman


It is a long awaited pleasure, for which I thank Messrs. Ketner and Putnam, to have this important example of Peirce's transitional philosophizing available on my shelf where I can reach for it and study it at my leisure. Bits of these lectures were placed separately and confusingly in the Collected Papers with no indication of the time at which Peirce wrote them.

The introduction, comments, and notes (comprising 119 of 261 pages of text) are both misleading and instructive. It contains a brief biographical sketch which makes no mention of Peirce's disabling illnesses and the alcohol and drug abuse connected with them, or of his many serious moral failings as causes for his inability to succeed professionally. Instead, continuing an unfortunate pattern of prudishness which undermines any serious attempt to understand this prodigious man, the authors write of "trying to forgive his frailties." In fact, these lectures were given a few months after he had spent two poverty-stricken years with his seriously ill wife in New York City as a fugitive from Pennsylvania law for the crime of assault on his female servant (not the first), reduced to sleeping in the streets and stealing food to keep from starving, while he frantically tried to being one of his many and foolhardy get-rich-quick schemes to succeed. He wrote a friend at the time, "The prospect is that I shall soon be in receipt of large sums from an invention . . . almost an Arabian nights cave of wealth . . . my share in it will be worth several million dollars." Nor do the authors present the intoxicated, obsessive and afflicted philosopher who "voraciously" pursued truth as "an uncontrollable impulse" at the sacrifice of almost everything else. Truly, his was a singular, magnificent, almost Rabelaisian intelligence which continued furiously to track down the Real in every instant he could snatch from his struggle to survive. As Peirce wrote James in one of the illumi-