simplify and dismiss Dewey's works in the process. In fact there may be great danger in doing so.

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Editor Bradley Dean provides us with the first new book by Thoreau in 125 years. This volume is significant in a number of areas: its own intrinsic interest, its proof of Thoreau's intellectual vitality in the last two years before he died from tuberculosis at the age of forty-four, its statement of Thoreau's philosophy of science, and its pro-Darwinian, anti-Agassizian ecological outlook.

A goodly number of Thoreau's devotees have, for a long time, accepted the canard, most explicitly stated by Odell Shepard, editor of The Heart of Thoreau's Journal, that Thoreau's shift of interest after 1857 represented intellectual, even moral decline. For Shepard, Thoreau's wide-angle lens Transcendentalism narrowed its focus to a microscopic scienticism as he became fascinated with trivial analyses and minute description of nature. What Faith in a Seed demonstrates is that Thoreau longstanding mix of poetry and science, only shifted relative emphasis from the later to the former. In his fine introduction, Ralph Richardson (author of the celebrated Henry Thoreau: A Life of the Mind, see SAAP Newsletter #56, June 1990) explains this shift of interest and emphasis:

Walden is great—perhaps our greatest—celebration of the sweet freedom of a life in nature that is single, unattached, and uncommitted. The Dispersion of Seeds, in contrast, celebrates fertility, fecundity, and interconnectedness. Walden is about the growth and cultivation of the self; The Dispersion of Seeds is about the growth of communities and the rise of new generations. Walden is the acknowledged masterpiece of Thoreau the poet-naturalists; The Dispersion of Seeds, even in its rough-draft form, is the culminating work of Thoreau the writer-scientist. (4)

As is well known, Thoreau was not well published during his own lifetime—only two books (Two Weeks on the Concord and Merrimack and Walden) and about a dozen essays. These publications represent perhaps only about one-tenth of his output. Beyond 6,000 pages of Journal, 3,000 manuscript pages on American Indians, Thoreau had accumulated and was beginning to organize three volumes of scientific observations dealing with the natural phenomenon he had scrutinized around Concord over a ten year period. The first of these scientific volumes dealt with Thoreau's carefully documented observations on how seeds were dispersed—by

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animals, by the wind, rivers, and lakes and by the trees and plants themselves. (Excerpts from the other two planned volumes are also include by way of short chapters on "Wild Fruits," "Weeds and Grasses" and "Forest Trees").

As most other nineteenth-century intellectuals, when Thoreau read Darwin's On the Origin of Species in 1860 a significant corner was turned. But, as it turns out, Darwin's impact did not change so much as reinforce what Thoreau was already convinced of; in Thoreau, Darwin was preaching to the converted. Needing proselytizing to was the unconverted imminent Harvard scientist Louis Agassiz. Richardson nicely summarizes the situation, "Agassiz was the most powerful scientist to his day, whereas Thoreau was a minor—if reputable—local naturalist. Yet on the big issue, Agassiz was wrong and Thoreau was right" (8). Agassiz believed species were fixed, the result of a special creative act by God and their dispersion the fruit of the Creator's first week of work. But as early as 1857, at a dinner at Emerson's, Thoreau had challenged Agassiz's "science." Thoreau was the better scientist; his investigations (in this case clearly uncontaminated by religious dogma) revealed that natures was fluid, responsive to environmental and other changes and that creation was an ongoing affair of every era, even the current one.

What Faith in a Seed shows in detail, is Thoreau, the scientist, at work. Again Richardson puts it concisely: The Dispersion of Seeds, is then a very early draft of Thoreau's book-length study, in minute detail, of 'how according to my observations, our forest trees and other vegetables are planted by Nature'. . . . The draft is so rough that its final form is not entirely clear; but what we have here in Bradley P. Dean's meticulous and principled edition, is sufficient to elucidate the general direction of Thoreau's thought" (13).

What can be gained is an intriguing insight into Thoreau's theory and practice of science. Thoreau's procedures are clean and straightforward. Here are typical instances: "My purpose in this chapter is to show how, according to my observations, our forest trees and other vegetables are planted by Nature" (24). His scrutiny is disciplined and patient. After a long account of how squirrels distributed pitch-pine seeds, Thoreau notes, "thus, my theory was confirmed by observation" (29). Or when discussing whether seeds could be dispersed by the action of rivers, Thoreau tested how long seeds would stay sound in water. "For, as I find by experiment, though the scales soon sink in water, the seeds float for many days" (44). Or when discussing the impact of the wind, Thoreau argues "though we do not commonly observe these seeds floating through the air, yet suitable tests will almost everywhere reveal them" (59).

Thoreau's scientific findings are peppered with modest and measured disclaimers: "I think that I see how this tree is propagated" (62), "I am aware that I am not at all peculiar in asserting . . ." (67), "I think that we are warranted only in supposing that . . . " (101), "I do not always state the facts exactly in the order observed, but select out of my numerous
observations extended over a series of years the most important
ones..." (104) or "These are some of the reasons that occur to me, but I do not quite understand it yet" (121).

Above all Faith in a Seed illustrates how mid nineteenth-century thinkers sought to make science and literature mutually reinforcing. This was before the age of professional science—even Darwin preferred to call himself, "a person interested in natural history"—and it is clearer that Thoreau's scientific accomplishments deserve acknowledgement. Even more aggressively stated, Thoreau's claim to the title of a pioneer ecologist is underscored. It is now evident that in his Walden and now in his Faith in a Seed Thoreau excelled at a literary genre mixing science and literature, that "nature writers" such as Aldo Leopold, Edward Abbey, Annie Dillard and Barry Lopez also employ.

In a word, Faith in a Seed examines the patience, flexibility, economy and interconnectedness of nature which ecologists seek to have the unconverted appreciate. In his "Editor's Notes" Bradley Dean explains his goals: "This volume presents a clear reading text of The Dispersion of Seed and a representative selection from Wild Fruits so that the significance of Thoreau's late natural history may be appreciated by his large and growing audience of general readers, by scientists and environmentalists, by historians of science, and by students of American literature" (217). To that list should be added students of American Philosophy. Dean has succeeded admirably!

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In the contemporary resurgence of interest in William James, there are many tasks for scholars in mapping out the life, theories, and legacy of America's most broadly influential philosopher. Daniel Bjork's contribution to this project is in supplying a finely detailed portrait of James's life, taken largely from unpublished sources. The narrative thread for this biographical achievement is not sustained by strong theoretical claims. Because the theories presented are not essential to sustain the biographical portrait, the book can be read on two levels.

This biography is an odd mixture of professional and popular styles. The biographical research is thorough and rigorous. It produces, for example, striking insights about James's relation with his wife, Alice Howe Gibbens James. Their long courtship was extended because William "refused any union not based on mutual sacrifice to higher spiritual and metaphysical principles" (100). Bjork shows William sharing with Alice an 1873 notebook displaying his dilemma over the allures of empiricism and ideal-