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Bjork's contribution to this project is in supplying a finely detailed portrait of James's life, taken largely from unpublished sources.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-
ism, and the biographer proposes that Alice had more to do with his recovery from spiritual crisis than did Charles Renouvier or any other philosopher.

Fans of revisionism, however, will be disappointed that there is no evidence for some kind of intellectual partnership. Bjork makes no moves to portray this Alice James as a suppressed genius—a case that Jean Strouse, in *Alice James: A Biography* (1980) has made forcefully for William's sister. In fact, the marriage seems quite conventional even by Victorian standards, with William as the often absent worldly success and Alice serving him as emotional supporter and intellectual sounding board. None of this is incompatible with Bjork's more dramatic claim that they engaged in a "tragical marriage" because of William's hope that with him "she as well must bear the idealistic cross" (98). In emphasizing Alice Gibbens James, Bjork also proposes placing her instead of William's father, the elder Henry James, as a dominant personal influence. Here Bjork seems to be reacting to Howard Feinstein's psychobiographical reading of the father's relationship with his son. While this turn from the fatherly influence is an important opening to other figures in his life, Bjork also missed the intellectual discourse and contest between father and son on art, science, religion, and philosophy as he dismisses the importance of psychoanalytic tension.

The book is chock full of intimacies from James's life. For example, during 1900-1901, when James was planning and composing the Gifford Lectures that would become *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), we are treated to a personal panorama of medical problems and James's restless attempts to find cures. Unfortunately, Bjork quickly dismisses the homeopathic and other unorthodox medical treatments that James sought out in his later years. Bjork's narrative opens an opportunity for further research since James the thinker was sympathetic with many of the same forms of healing that James the person was seeking out.

While the biographical research opens up much new scholarly ground, Bjork's theoretical analysis is pitched to a general audience. Scholars of James will likely grow impatient with Bjork's thematic emphasis on the great thinker's "vision" or "genius," which prompted his "refusal to stay within the confines of one field of knowledge" (164) and which took on a life of its own, motivating James's work. But students, generalists, and newcomers to James's work may find inspiration from Bjork's frank and passionate, if often speculative, descriptions of a genius at work. It is not surprising that professional reviewers (for example, James Hoopes in the *American Historical Review* and George Cotkin in the *Transactions of the Peirce Society*) have derided Bjork's suggestion that James "beg[a]n to think of consciousness as sensibly continuous" (66) while gazing at the tangled banks of the Amazon River during his voyage with Louis Agassiz to Brazil during his twenties, or that while there "his eyes and mind were poised to translate the immediacy of nature" in preparation for his "describing pure experience" later in life (64).
Bjork is equally bold in his assertion of theoretical theme. The biographer decisively sides with John McDermott and Gerald Myers in calling radical empiricism the center of James's theoretical achievement and of his life in general. Although he offers a limited exposition of the philosophy, Bjork makes the intriguing biographical point that the relational perspective of radical empiricism was a direct product of his interdisciplinary genius. Like Nancy Frankenberry's critique of Richard Rorty's dismissal of James's radical empiricism, Bjork makes broad claims for radical empiricism as a modernist and quasi-religious insight. Bjork's James is an incipient sick soul with a "deep sadness" about him as John Jay Chapman observed (229), with a religious desire for grace like "the saints of old" (90), but with a vision of "a final secularization—a noncommittal world of fluid, adjustable relationships" (267). By claiming that James was not actually as moral, pragmatic, or melioristic as he seems, he misses opportunities to reconcile these often-recognized twin forces in James's soul. And as Charlene Haddock Seigfried has already observed in William James's Radical Reconstruction of Philosophy (1990), Bjork's "postmodernist" reading is more relativistic than James would have intended.

Bjork's use of radical empiricism contributes to a recent trend in biographical studies of James. Where the conventional wisdom had been that James had one profound spiritual crisis during his 1867 to 1872 vocational indecision, and then rebounded from that with a philosophical memory of the need to assert free will, recent trends have spread out those moments of crisis throughout his life. Howard Feinstein in Becoming William James (1984), presents a prolonged vocational crisis leading up to the more overt and famous one. Bjork presents James in crisis periodically throughout his life, with his secular religion as a way of coping with the tragic vision that bubbled up from these dark moments. More recently, Seigfried has used James's multiple crises—before 1872, in 1895, and in 1908—as organizing moments in his philosophical evolution.

Despite the secularist portrait of James, Bjork is careful to distinguish him from the contemporaneous materialistic Darwinists. Unfortunately, Bjork misses the opportunity to show how James used his reading of Darwin and other parts of his scientific education to postulate the very qualities of mind that Bjork finds at the center of James's vision: selective attention, the active interested mind, and a "restless consciousness" (121). Bjork blurs Darwin and Darwinism, and in portraying James rejecting both, he leaves hanging the question of how James assimilated his scientific education into his psychological and philosophical work.

Beneath the abundant biographical information, the center of Bjork's vision of James is an avid appreciation of his intellectual hero. In this sense, it is much like Jacques Barzun's A Stroll with William James (1983) and Bennett Ramsey's Submitting to Freedom (1993), but Bjork's book is even more focused on James
himself, with very little treatment of the contexts surrounding James's personal genius. When read on the professional level, this biography may reinforce philosophers' prejudices against historians as nontheoretical compilers of information rather than as collaborators supplying the contextual components of ideas in process. But if readers bracket Bjork's theoretical speculations, they can learn much about the personal dimensions of James's life that Bjork has assiduously mined from published and unpublished sources.

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WHAT IS COGNITIVE SCIENCE? Barbara Von Eckardt. The MIT Press, 1993. x plus 466 pp. $45.00

When one is on a quest, the reckoning of one's position is a vital component to the overall goal. The quest for understanding the cognitive processes, thought, consciousness, and for the development of a comprehensive theory of neuroscience, the mind, and the brain, is perhaps the grandest enterprise of the close of this millennia. There have been a plethora of books and addresses defining issues, developing theories, or detailing discoveries. There is, however, little in the way of unity or even a comprehensiveness that could be called a reckoning.

The text that Von Eckardt provides is singularly an attempt to calculate the current position of a relatively new field of cognitive science. In short, the book seeks to determine exactly what cognitive science is and is not, where it is in its quest, and what must be done to complete the adventure. It provides a depth of logic and mathematics that suggests the use of navigational reckoning, plus fills the pages with an overview of the issues, contributions, and problems as numerous fields come together to form a new science—cognitive science.

Von Eckardt's purpose is to determine if, indeed, what has transpired warrants the title "science" and if a Kuhnian paradigm exists, or is developing, for this infant field. To reckon the position of this potential science, the author analyzes a myriad of arguments at every turn within the quest. Such a comprehensive approach makes calculations tedious, but provides an accurate assessment for the current position of cognitive science and suggests corrective measures needed to remain on course.

Chapter 1 develops the foundation for the book, but in doing so, offers more issues than is possible to address cogently in one text. The answer to the dilemma is to move some of the issues to appendices, which address topics of special interest to the author. In Chapter 2, the author, in her own words, "will chart and attempt to adjudicate the various disagreements, and will present what I take to be the most defensible conception."