Harvard's philosophy department, it would be difficult (if not impossible) for him to escape the yoke of this genealogy. Yet, escaping Harvard's living legends was essential to Eliot's pursuit of the poetic life. This is very clear in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and may account for Eliot's consolation in poetry rather than philosophy. In it he notes: "poetry...is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality." Through such an escape it was Eliot's goal to express a kind of transcendental emotion: "[There are very few people who appreciate] emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet." Nonetheless, as the presence of Jain's book implies, Eliot remains haunted by his Harvard association and the personal history that he tried so vehemently to overcome in his writing.

One is tempted, given Jain's enlightening account, to reread Eliot's poems according to his years at Harvard. However, we should be wary in attributing an overarching system to Eliot's poetics. Indeed, Eliot's rejection of philosophy is a rejection of the task of "disentangling the riddling oracles of the world, to paragraph and punctuate them and insert the emphases." (88) As is implicit in Jain's account, Eliot is satisfied with encountering riddles and sacrificing the philosophy of progress characteristic of the 'Golden Age'. There is a final reason why the superiority of Jain's account threatens to undermine Eliot's view. Because her account is clear, concise and comprehensive, it is easy for us to forget that Eliot rejects Babbitt's concern with tradition, struggling with the "problem of the interpretation of history." Thus, in Eliot's terms, works like Jain's should be viewed as more of a contemporary narrative than an authoritative historical grounding. However, it is up to the reader to determine the import of reflecting upon the historical portrait of Eliot rendered by present circumstances.

Finally, this book provides an excellent window into the origins of American philosophy in the Harvard tradition. For the novice it is an invaluable introduction into the richness of the debates taking place at the beginning of the twentieth century. The more experienced reader will appreciate Jain's ability to provide brief yet thorough synopses of a variety of philosophers. In many cases, such a task yields superficial and fragmentary accounts of each thinker. However, the text remains untainted by personal presumption and thus navigates a diverse subject matter with surprising agility and economy.

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Present debates over the foundations of American thinking on individualism present an unfortunate and incorrect bifurcation of the roots of American thinking on liberty. This brief thesis by
the author drives him to the historical task of recovering the complexity in American thinking that revolves around the term "liberty" and at the same time requires a complete undermining of the myth that revolutionary Americans were radical individualists and that "freedom from government" grounds the formation of the United States. "In America," Shain says, "a political regime in which the rule of law dominated the central government and was constitutionally bound to respect the rights of individuals and communities was conjoined to a normative vision of the good that demanded that local intermediate institutions intrusively mold the recalcitrant clay of fallen humanity. In effect, Americans enjoyed what has since come to be called a liberal theory of (central) governmental institutions while also profiting from a local and communal, largely Protestant-driven, theory of the human good. Mixing and matching between regime types and theories of the good are obviously possible, even if not in the long run necessarily stable" (273).

Shain makes a sound argument from texts as varied as occasional sermons, letters to editors, pamphlets, and dictionary entries. Some of the sources are unnamed due to the nature of the publications he uses. The breadth of sources he employs makes for a convincing reading, and the addition of lesser known writers and thinkers sustains his argument nicely.

Shain presents his argument in two sections. Section one, "Standing: The Public Good, the Individual, and the Community" contains four chapters. In Chapter one, Shain argues that revolutionary writers and spokesmen valued public good over private good; in Chapter two, that 18th century American political culture was localist and communal; Chapter three, that morally sanctioned relationships were contained between the individual and the public good of the community, while private aspirations of the liberated self were condemned; and, Chapter four, serving the public good and true private ends sustains American thinking without embracing a normative theory of the good that is individualistic.

In section two Shain builds up the driving notion of liberty from period sources. His primary thesis is that the notion of liberty operative in the revolutionary period is distinct from the 20th century notion of liberty as "freedom from" all outside control of the individual. To this end he engages in a discussion of liberty and freedom, Chapter 5, spiritual liberty, Chapter 6, corporate liberty, Chapter 7, and slavery, or anti-liberty, Chapter eight.

One of the real strengths of Shain's work is the image of a developing structure of American thinking -- from Puritan to reformed Christian, republican, to enlightened humanists. No one center of individualism appears in any of these modes of thinking. Shain does find tendencies toward 20th century individualism in this progression but these tendencies are isolated radical elements. Shain maintains his thesis that the revolutionary period does not exhibit a popular or philosophically complete
move to individualism.

One weakness of Shain's argument develops from his success. The question remains, from where did the individualism arise that has been pinned on the revolutionary period? In his zeal to separate the images of individualism between now and then, Shain might have missed some of the threads of our "negative" notion of liberty that have their source Puritan thinking without having been given open and public expression. Shain doesn't make a guess where the tension comes from that eventuates in individualism. He does dispel the myth that it was prominent in American thinking, but he does not dispel the myth that it is American, just the negative individualism as freedom from government was not part of parcel of the common thinking of the people who instigated and fought the Revolutionary war.

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Founders of Constructive Postmodern Philosophy, ed.  

This is the ninth volume in the SUNY Series in Constructive Postmodern Thought, edited by David Ray Griffin. He is a Professor at Claremont Graduate School, and Executive Director of the Center for Process Studies there. (It has been said that Process Philosophy is the Philosophy what Process Cheese is to Cheese.) As Gutenberg was a "modern," one wonders why "postmoderns" publish books. The "Founders of Constructive Postmodern Philosophy" in this volume include: Peirce, James, Bergson, Whitehead, and Hartshorne (4.5 Americans). This volume contains an Introduction by Professor Griffin, followed by five essays: Peter Ochs (of Drew University) on C.S. Peirce, Marcus P. Ford (author of William James' Philosophy) on William James, Pete A.Y. Gunter (of the University of North Texas) on Henri Bergson, J.B. Cobb jr. (Professor Emeritus at Claremont) on A.N. Whitehead and D.R. Griffin on Charles Hartshorne. It may well be that "Constructive Post-Modernism" is to be preferred to "Destructive" or "Deconstructive Postmodern Philosophy"; but those who do not find the term "postmodern" particularly helpful will doubtless tend to view this volume mainly as the product of a "cult," or "sect." The authors mainly "preach to the converted," to those enamored of "postmodernism" al-ready. They do little to try to convince us that the term is of monumental importance. The term "postmodern" (coined by Lyotard et al.) is very fashionable. It may be useful in art criticism, as artistic trends nowadays tend to be mere passing fads. However, one would suppose that philosophers, trained in critical thinking, would find most talk about "post-modernism" to be poppycock. The term "mo dern" is polymorphous, but not entirely perverse. How, then, can one have a wholesale attitude to the "modern"? Some believe that is "modern" is good, and some that it is "modern" is bad. How can it be judged as a whole? One can deny "modernity" in certain regards or respects. Those who deny "modernity" do not always agree with each other. It once was fashionable to speak of "The Counterculture." But the status quo can be opposed in various ways. There are countless