we were on station. I was (at least vaguely) aware of the fallibilism and projectivity within my own thinking, and who could say what real danger would reveal?

It does not occur to us now to essentialize the connection between the appearance of personal qualities and the "natural" environment. It did to Thoreau, and his observations in *The Maine Woods* reveal befuddlement. Looking for evidence of a simple relation between the wilderness and the heroic qualities he admired, his reports are filled with anomalies. For example, natives he wanted to revere for embodying the "natural virtues" seemed to have lost them; Indian guides were often shiftless and displayed less self-reliance and fortitude than many of European roots.

Thoreau's "naturalism," if it can be called that (as Taylor does), preceded Darwin and lacked all but a rhetorical consistency. In this it bears little resemblance to that associated with famous later New Englanders like Dewey. Yet it served a similar purpose, in providing a trope to supplant and evade the inherited European tradition, giving Americans a clean intellectual slate for revising, devising, or projecting standards of political and ethical conduct. Later versions of naturalism would borrow from this, while becoming less reductive and more holistic. But the problem would still remain: Where, in "nature," do our moral and political notions come from, and how are they grounded?

I found myself wishing that Taylor had probed more deeply into the source of Thoreau's "sharp and vigilant eye for political outrage," and his role in shaping emergent American ideals. The "bachelor uncle" simile is less compelling than, say, the secular successor of the New England clergy, and founder of an American civil religion. I would also like to have understood how Thoreau's later influence could remain so substantial, by dint of example more than any connection with traditional ethical or political scholarship.

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This insightful collection of essays is one of a number of important works which have followed in the wake of Leonard Harris's *Philosophy Born of Struggle: Anthology of Afro-American Philosophy from 1917* (Kendall/Hunt, 1983). The essays in the current collection originally appeared in a special triple issue of the *Philosophical Forum*, published in December 1992 and devoted to African American philosophers. Like Harris's, Pittman's book (as the title suggests) is largely concerned with mapping or defining the contours of an African American philosophical tradition. In his introduction to the book, Pittman observes that "The presumption has always been that those engaged in philosophical reflection in the Western academy are white men, and that they are writing about white men for other white men" (ix). His book joins others in challenging that presumption.
While its strengths are many, there is at least one weakness which deserves comment. Pittman, as editor, chose to include two introductions: the first, “Introduction to the Routledge Edition,” is a slightly revised version of his forceful December 1992 journal introduction, followed by “freshly written” comments on the various essays; the second, “Introduction,” is a reprint of the December 1992 journal introduction. Either would have sufficed. Instead, the redundancy (which on occasion includes entire paragraphs) starts the book on a weak note and detracts from what is otherwise a rewarding reading experience.

Following the introductions are twelve carefully crafted, cogent essays, divided into three sections—Philosophical Traditions, The African-American Tradition, and Racism, Identity, and Social Life. K. Anthony Appiah, Kwasi Wiredu, Lucius Outlaw, and Leonard Harris are the contributors to section one. Bernard Boxill, Frank Kirkland, and Tommy Lott to section two. And Adrian Piper, Laurence Thomas, Michele Moody-Adams, Anita Allen, and Howard McGary to section three. Due to space constraints, I comment briefly only on the lead essay from each section.

The lion’s share of Appiah’s piece lays the groundwork for answering the question posed in the essay’s title, “African-American Philosophy?” After eighteen pages, he points to The Souls of Black Folk as exemplar of such a philosophy. A page later he reiterates and summarizes: “so it seems to me, we have a substantial tradition of African-American reflection that includes—along with Du Bois and Crummell and Delany—intellectuals like Frederick Douglass and Henry Highland Garnett... If anyone wants to know of a substantial tradition of philosophical work by African-Americans and relevant to their circumstances, surely that is it” (30). One wishes, however, that Appiah had found room for what Du Bois’s friend and sister philosopher, Anna Julia Cooper, writing in 1892, terms “the darkened eye restored”; that is, room for the black female philosopher (as well as her brothers). Perhaps aware, on at least some level, of this omission, Appiah writes in the penultimate paragraph: “it seems simply astonishing how little of the political philosophy of the philosophers explicitly acknowledges the distinctive and different significances of race and other kinds of collective identity as well as of gender to the questions that arise at the intersection of the state with morality” (31).

Bernard Boxill’s “Two Traditions in African American Political Philosophy” focuses on Martin Delany as separatist and Frederick Douglass as assimilationist. Hence, he also gives scant attention to gender, but he does, as in his prior writings, provide illuminating analyses, this time of the political views of two archetypal thinkers. He argues that where Delany, doubtful about any inherent goodness in human nature, “denounced moral suasion as a way for blacks to win their liberty” (120), Douglass embraced the efficacy of moral suasion, maintaining that “all mankind have the same wants, arising out of a common nature” (125). These profoundly different views about morality and human nature, contends Boxill, are characteristic of two great traditions in African American political thought. The assimilationist tradition asserts that a color-blind society is both possible and desirable in America; separatists, on the other hand, maintain that such a society is either not possible, or is not desirable. Emphasizing that “Delany warns us [of] the incredible proclivity of the human race to racism” (133), Boxill, in the end, sides with him.
Running for 44 pages, Adrian Piper’s “Xenophobia and Kantian Rationalism” is nearly twice as long as the other pieces. It is also the most technical of the essays and presupposes considerable knowledge of Kantian ethics. Piper’s thesis, at bottom, is that “a Kantian conception of the self contains the resources for explaining and reforming xenophobia” (199). Such a phenomenon “is of particular concern for African Americans,” she submits, since “[a]s unwelcome intruders in white America we are the objects of xenophobia on a daily basis” (189).

In the final analysis, Pittman’s book thoroughly enriches and rewards. It also provides a compelling portrait of a substantial tradition of philosophical work, born and bred in the crucible of struggle.

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This is the third book in a trilogy that attempts a comprehensive view of the semiotic. While a trilogy and united in the author’s mind as a firstness, secondness, and thirdness, each of the books stand alone and have value for their own sake as part of a Peircean semiotic library. The first book, *Signs Becoming Signs: Our Perfusive and Pervasive Universe* (1991), is interdisciplinary although significantly influenced by the works of David Bohm, in quantum mechanics, and Ilya Prigogine, Nobel laureate studying physical chemical systems “far from equilibrium” where chaos can creatively produces a new order. The second book, *Semiosis in the Postmodern Age* (1995), as secondness, has a character of the interdisciplinary, returning to chaos and quantum theories, plus an interweaving of the works of physicist John A. Wheeler (a world renown relativist), Derrida, Habermas, Baudrillard, and others. However, the book leans more toward criticism in the process of indexing, and it is filled with diagrams and categorical lists that we come to expect from Merrell.

Generally addressing thirdness, *Signs Grow* is minimally biological and continues to address some of the same themes found in Merrell’s earlier books. The thesis is that ordered complexity, amid plurality, produces generals (thirds) degenerating into greater plurality, the semiotic process of signs begetting signs. The biological, then, is to be found within the semiotic process, not uniquely removed from the inorganic, nor even uniquely human, but rather a part of the whole semiosis. Such a semiosis permits a single sign to yield a single interpretant, which is yet another sign, unbounded within the scope of its own semiotic process, yet bounded by the semiotic triad of this first sign. In like manner, the human mind (going back to Peirce’s “Man :S Sign”) separates itself from the rest of the semiotic context (unbounded) until a Heisenberg reminds us of our connectedness within the system and so binds the human sign to the larger semiotic. Thus, Merrell ends his text with the cryptic “Thus the universe is, yet somehow is not,