Despite this minor detail, *The Rule of Reason* combines an excellent set of essays that should be read by anyone who is genuinely interested in the work of Peirce.

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In the epilogue to this text the author states that "this book is about how we are losing our minds." (p. 158) By this he means that, as humans, we need to experience things, others, etc. at the primary level, but that, more and more, we are engaged in secondary, i.e., processed, modified, and packaged experience. This imbalance is a pervasive one. Education, for example, has moved from a focus upon hands-on experience to an emphasis on users' manuals. Even physical intimacy now comes packaged in the form of phone sex. Most children spend more than half of their waking hours plugged into the processed information box of television.

Reed does not believe that we can simply return to a "golden" age. But he does believe that progress can be made by utilizing the resources of American philosophy, especially Dewey, and to a lesser extent James, Putnam, Rorty and others-- to illustrate just why primary experience is so important to us. He also employs James Gibson's "ecological psychology," which sees its foremost task as that of "explaining how people and animals encounter their surroundings." (p. 7)

The downgrading of personal experience as unimportant buttresses an oppressive social order. (p. 37) Echoing Dewey, Reed says that "philosophers--especially postmodern ones--need to spend more of their time thinking about the places within which people find themselves (schools, workplaces, in front of the television) and less time dealing with abstractions." (p. 46) In the twentieth century, "we are beginning to lose the ability to experience the world directly," as we succumb to the Cartesian fear of uncertainty. The latter "has become a major cultural force in our world.... Every field from medicine to money making--even mysticism--searches for foolproof techniques." (p. 59) As a result, the environment we are leaving to our children is both degraded and dangerous. "Our post-modern world is thus achieving the reverse of what Dewey called for. Instead of using our information technology to create workplaces within which human experience can grow and thrive we are using the technology to manufacture jobs that are often little more than glorified pigeonholes, with all opportunity for growth and reflection eliminated." (p. 64) A standard refrain in many work situations is: "the computer won't let us do that." Intelligence in general has been redefined so as to mean "reliability, rapidity, and repeatability," while at the very same time pretending to value wisdom and individual creativity. In such a routinized environment one can't grow because nothing varies. In short, "mechanized experience is limited and limiting." (p. 91)
As an alternative to the standard western view of sensation as atomistic and acontextual, Reed offers "occlusion," a relatively simple fact of primary experience that enables us to determine whether experienced objects are real or only apparent. "From an ecological perspective, experience is ... not so much something one has as it is a process of learning in which one engages." (p. 105) Neither representationalism as such nor the selected information offered up by television are adequate descriptions of how we have our primary experience--which is really not a matter of my just having an image that correctly matches the one you have, but rather of my experience fitting in with yours. "What we need," then, for Reed, "is for people to learn how to fit and work together." (p. 115) Unfortunately, we are making our schools and workplaces into little Cartesian prisons." (p.116) This modern degradation of experience, which saps so much hope, can be countered by the occlusionist view of perception-- which is tied to activity and hence is anticipatory in nature. This is the fundamental value of primary experience. As prospective, it lets loose hope, "containing within it glimmerings of paths to possible futures." (p. 145) "This emphasis in expanding the domain of experience, both within the individual and among individuals, is Dewey's greatest legacy." (p. 160)

A few caveats are perhaps in order. First, it may be more difficult than Reed indicates to distinguish primary from secondary experience. In addition, the quest for "pure experience" can be notoriously difficult, as William James noted. Going further, does what counts as primary or secondary experience itself varies from context to context?

It is important to note that Reed does not want to reject secondary experience altogether--only to keep it from usurping the role of primary experience altogether. Indeed, he uses a form of secondary experience, viz., a text, to inform the reader of the importance and necessity of primary experience. This review functions in a similar manner. Hopefully, it can serve in a directive and not merely descriptive fashion, i.e., point beyond itself toward Reed's "original" text, and, ultimately, toward primary experience itself.

Reed's excellent book provides a concrete illustration of how American pragmatism can be applied to everyday contemporary situations. It works well in the classroom, and makes for interesting reading. As such it is highly recommended.

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William J. Gavin


The seven essays that comprise the latest book by Richard Shusterman (Professor of Philosophy at Temple University and Directeur de Programme at the Collège Internationale de Philosophie in Paris) were composed for various occasions over the