

("best-available answer seeking") characteristics of our inductive methods and propensities. But Rescher insists upon a sustainable difference here between abductive jumps with respect to methods and similar moves with respect to theses; he argues provocatively that "...a satisfactory evolutionary pragmatism must be predicated upon the shift from a Darwinism of theses to a Darwinism of methods" (p. 236).

All of us who have been enamored with Rescher's genius and his accomplishments will be eager for Volume II of Rescher's magnum, entitled The Validity of Values, and Volume III, Metaphilosophical Inquiries. I suspect we won't have long to wait!

Guy Axtell

University of Nevada/Reno

THOREAU'S FABLE OF INSCRIBING by Frederick Garber. Princeton UP, 1991. 266 pp. \$35.00.

In his newest meditation on Henry Thoreau, Frederick Garber examines Thoreau's almost insistently oxymoronic or contradictory views on the nature of language, the nature of nature, and his relation to both. Garber sees Thoreau as engaging in a "rhetoric of self-correction" (25) which not only entertains opposing views but is driven by a calculated resistance to binary forms and so remains open-ended and indeterminate, characterized by deliberately sustained contradictions and paradoxes. "We have to read Thoreau with an ear for the incongruous" (43), Garber claims; and what we will find is not a canon crippled by its unresolved contradictions (as Richard Bridgman found in Dark Thoreau), "but a searching out of such states in order to find shapes to control ambivalence" (64).

According to Garber, Thoreau found a shape for containing his ambivalence and for directing his search in the form of an implicit myth or "fable," traceable throughout his writings, amounting to a kind of "quest" for some sufficient means of being "at home" in the world. Garber's tracing of this fable is, in turn, the organizing force of his own study. Garber begins by examining Thoreau's ambivalence toward the status of writing itself--alternately celebrating the primacy of words ("A word is wiser than any man") and conceding their "inescapable secondariness" (18) to experience, to being. Thoreau entertains both views, and Garber warns that "his reading of the nature of language has . . . to be described as decidedly oxymoronic" (18-19). One dimension of Thoreau's "quest" is "for the ultimate word and the sentence that can say it all," and this, Garber claims, is "finally a quest for home" (23). Inscription, in its largest sense--including not only writing but such diverse means of marking one's presence in the world as digging a cellar, plowing a field, or leaving a brick on a mountaintop--is a means of discovering or asserting one's place in the world. Thoreau's

quest for home through multiple forms of inscription is pursued by means of his rhetoric of self-correction, however, resulting in an insistent and, in Garber's view, constructive indeterminacy.

Garber juxtaposes Thoreau's ideal of being at home wherever one is with his recurring realizations that we are never entirely at home in this world. In A Week Thoreau both celebrates the purely natural life, declaring that "Here or nowhere is our heaven," and also imagines "another, purer realm" of which we can catch only glimpses from this world. Building this own house at Walden was perhaps Thoreau's most explicit manifestation of his quest for home, but Garber suggests that Thoreau was profoundly aware of the underlying irony that "Dwelling in the largest sense of being at home in the world cannot be fully compatible with the building of a dwelling" (149). The Canadian woodchopper Alek Therien is a "natural" man who seems to be "at home in the world," but his very naturalness prevents him from being sufficiently "alert" to his condition (176). The "single and central query that determined the thrust of [Thoreau's] life," as well as "the basic question this study has asked from its own beginning" is formulated by Garber this way: "Is it possible even for someone with all the alterness Thoreau requires to make what for Thoreau would be a sufficient home in the world?" (176). Clearly, the answer to this highly qualified question is "no." Not surprisingly, Garber's meditation concludes by celebrating Thoreau's--and his own--inability to resolve this question or to conclude the quest: "As for the present, our home making will be just as our language is, incomplete, imperfect, open-ended, unresolved" (202).

Garber's reading of Thoreau is both illuminating and provocative. He is especially good at teasing out the ambivalences and contradictions in specific passages from Thoreau, and he is therefore convincing when he generalizes about Thoreau's "rhetoric of self-correction" as well. While the question of being "at home in the world" is demonstrably a recurring theme in Thoreau, Garber sometimes strains to build this into a coherent "fable" that comprehends the range of issues he addresses in this study. This, however, does not seriously detract from the insightful and valuable contributions this book makes to Thoreau studies.

Steven Fink

The Ohio State University

**REFLECTIONS ON "THE PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGY: WILLIAM JAMES AFTER A CENTURY**, Edited by Michael G. Johnson and Tracy B. Henley, (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1990). xvii plus 323 pp. \$49.95.

There is an historical appropriateness to this book prepared and published in 1990 to celebrate the centenary of the printing