

dare to say "I think" and achieve at least momentary existence. So we haunt the world.

Emerson's philosophical progress is a fresh answer to Descartes. We must say, state, and enact our existence. The peculiar Emersonian twist is that commitment comes through intuition, in exalting whim (pp. 114-115) And Cavell also realizes the temptation of skepticism: "it names our wish to strip ourselves of having to mean one thing or one way, rather than another."

Still we are hoboes:

...in Walden the proof that what you have found you have made your own, your home, is that you are free to leave it. Walden begin and ends with statements of departure from Walden (p. 175).

I liked the reconstitution of the skeptic as a hobo. Although Emerson and Thoreau were daoists when it came to travel, the hobo is especially true to Sextus's characterization of the skeptic as one who continues to inquire but accepts appearances in the meantime. My one complaint is that Cavell does not carry out the reformulation of the basis of skepticism. This is where James, Peirce, Clifford, and Dewey could be brought into his discussion. Cavell could certainly choose another tradition to approach the task he sets for himself, perhaps Schopenhauer will fit the bill. For now he has embraced an aesthetic sensibility which animates our world until we are ready to move on from it and leave it to others. Maybe that is the Emersonian price of freedom. Limited skepticism allows us to embrace edification and avoid commitment.

Anthony Graybosch

California State University, Chico

Post-Analytic Philosophy, ed. John Rajchman and Cornell West, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985. XXX plus 275 pp.

Once upon a time this book was to herald a new movement in American philosophy. This new movement was a break with analytic philosophy and a new beginning -- post-analytic philosophy, or a return -- neo-pragmatism. There are fourteen essays in this volume (including the introductory essay by one editor, John Rajchman, and an afterward by the other, Cornell West) organized into four sections (Introduction, Literary Culture, Science, and Moral Theory). Most of the essays have been previously published. Many of the authors have moved beyond the strictly analytic philosophy of their training and early work, thereby embodying in their own work this sense of a transition to a new sort of philosophy. These include Hilary Putnam, Thomas Nagel and one Richard Rorty.

I was thinking about this book at the time of the 1993 SAAP meeting in Nashville, and have thought a great deal about it

since. There is a sense in which this is a very odd book to be reviewing for SAAP. Two names repeatedly popped into discussion during the meeting, and when they did so served as strategies of dismissal or silencing. Those names were "Rorty" and "analytic philosophy." I was troubled by this at the time, and thinking about this book has helped me put my finger on why. I want to suggest that the essays in this volume are important contributions to the ongoing "reconstruction" of American philosophy, and that this book (in spite of limitations I will identify) warrants a careful reading. I will give a brief overview of the book, and then discuss the break with analytic philosophy and close with a few words on Rorty.

Among the recurring themes in these essays are i) critiques of the "desire for objectivity" (Rorty, Nagel, Hacking and Kuhn), ii) an emphasis on community and what Rorty calls "solidarity" (Rorty, Bernstein, Bloom, Scanlon and Wolin), and iii) a transgressing of traditional disciplinary boundaries (Danto, Cavell, Bloom and Rorty), and iv) a concern with translating between communities (Davidson, Hacking and Kuhn).

One interesting fact about many of the "breaks" with analytic philosophy is that the break is only partial.¹ As we might expect, after Hegel, the tradition ran up against the limits of its own assumptions. In order to continue to explore the same questions/issues, a certain redirection was necessary, what we might call a "move to the social." The break is only partial for many in that i) a resistance to relativism (if that means "anything goes") remains,² and ii) the methodology is revised, not completely trashed. Let me take the second of these first.

One of the virtues of the analytic tradition is an emphasis on clarity (granted, often not achieved by its practitioners). Making our distinctions and arguments as clear as possible makes it easier for others to enter into the very ongoing dialogue both Rorty and SAAP valorize. The problem arises when clarity becomes an end-in-itself, when the point of being clear in the first place is lost. As Rorty writes, "there is nothing wrong with science, there is only something wrong with the attempt to divinize it" (p. 16). Or, while there is nothing wrong with the methodology of analytic philosophy as such, there is something wrong with the attempt to divinize it. That such an attempt occurred in the history of philosophy in America seems to begin to explain the equally wrong attempt to demonize it. Either of these attempts seems out of step with the very characteristics of plurality and open inquiry which are hallmarks of American Philosophy.

The resistance to relativism is in many ways a non-starter. As Rorty argues, relativism is only a problem if one holds to some notion of objective Truth. To use this as a complaint against pragmatism, or deconstruction, or Marxism is to beg the question. That such a conception of truth is problematic is precisely (one of) the point(s).

As Rajchman notes in his introductory essay, "Rorty introduces a new history which allies American pragmatism with recent French and German philosophy . . ." (p. xi). I think this is correct, and a salutary trend. An American philosophy which is content merely to mine its own tradition and is not in open dialogue with the rest of the world is a dying philosophy. That such a dialogue is ongoing was attested to by the recent SAAP meeting devoted to the reception of American Philosophy around the world. One of the odd limitations of the book is that it includes no "recent French and German philosophy." So, while this book is useful in presenting a certain recent moment (or, tracing a certain trajectory) in American philosophy, a reader must go beyond the essays presented here in order to fully understand post-analytic philosophy.³ Of course, no single collection can do everything we might like or need it to do. And, after a proudly a historical period in philosophy, many of these essays draw our attention to the history of American philosophy (for instance, see Bloom and Cavell on Emerson, pp. 84-126).

Finally, I should note that in spite of many evocations of "community" and "history" the accounts in many of these essays are remarkably thin on these issues. As Cornell West notes about Rorty, "Rorty leads philosophy to the complex world of politics and culture, but confines his engagement to transformation in the academy and apologetics for the modern West" (p. 268). In this, Rorty's work has much in common with some varieties of "post-modern" theory -- it is a version of history which does not speak of many histories (including those political, economic, sexual and racial) and is symptomatic of what Jurgen Habermas calls a "legitimation crisis" in advanced capitalist culture. In this respect, Rorty's work is far from an "authentic" Deweyian pragmatism which would consider a reconstructed philosophy as a tool for humans in the project of understanding our past and creating a more human (and humane) future. All that said, we should still read Rorty. His work was (and is) important in reopening a philosophical space for pragmatism, and he refuses to be merely a conservator of a tradition. For Rorty, a live tradition speaks to other ongoing traditions. I believe he is correct. At the same time, the very failures and limits of Rorty's work should be instructive to any interested in the continual rethinking and remaking of American philosophy.

(1) Here I have in mind some of the authors whose work is contained in this book (Putnam, Nagel, Davidson), and those such as Willard Van Orman Quine, Nelson Goodman and Wilfred Sellars who Cornell West identifies as reaching "conclusions which threatened the basic presuppositions of the paradigm" (p. 260)

(2) Rorty takes Putnam to task for continuing the "desire for objectivity" which is, he argues, "a disguised form of the fear of death of our community" (p. 14). To disagree with Rorty seems to indicate a failure of nerve, a desire to hide from the truth (or, to hide from a particular version of the truth).

(3) In this regard *After Philosophy: End or Transformation*, ed.

by Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman and Thomas McCarthy, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987, is a useful collection of essays which brings together essays representative of recent trends in American, British, French and German philosophy. This volume includes work by some found in Post-Analytic Philosophy (Rorty, Davidson and Putnam) as well as many whose work is referred to in the volume under review (including Derrida, Dummett, Foucault, Gadamer, Habermas, Lyotard, MacIntyre, Taylor and others).

University of Alabama at Huntsville

J. Craig Hanks

The American Deists: Voices of Reason and Dissent in the Early Republic. Kerry S. Walters. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1992. 394 pp. \$35.00.

Kerry S. Walters defines deism as "a general philosophical orientation" (51). Walters further suggests a "nucleus of belief shared by all deists" which gave them a "distinct intellectual identity": conviction in an orderly, rational universe as well as rational benevolent deity, distrust of metaphysical speculation and scriptural authority, advocacy of empirical methodology, denial of the divinity of Jesus and triune God, confidence in human progress, and an emphasis on the utility of virtue (51). Walters also realizes that no definition can contain deism of all its forms. Deism is a term--like humanism or even puritanism--which is useful but plays tricks on the dead. Recent historians of humanism and puritanism have begun to use those terms carefully as "tendencies." They try not to force individuals into the definition: but rather of those who recognize compatibility with each other. Walters does us the service of editing a collection of writings from thinkers who recognized each other and shared core intentions.

Walters, the author of Rational Infidels: The American Deists (Wolfeboro, NH: Longwood, 1992), offers a perfunctory introduction on the rise and fall of deism which suffers from trying to paint with a roller what can only be done with the fine brush of an impressionist. The names of Bacon, Newton, and Locke are used liberally and Calvinism becomes "the unrelenting presence: in every American colony and sect" (16). The "distinctively egalitarian nature of American deism" is attributed only to French influence (25). In the introduction, Walters waivers between nuanced understanding of the complexities of deism and black/white characterizations of non-deist individuals, events, and movements.

The excellence of the book lies in Walter's chapter introductions and the sources he edited. The selections from Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson are well chosen. The pragmatic heart of Jefferson's deism is clear in his advice to an orphaned nephew: "Your own reason is the only oracle given you by heaven, and you are answerable nor for the rightness but the uprightness of the decision" (117-18). In another letter, Jefferson admits