

Hoyningen-Huene, Paul
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LITTLE REVIEWS 173

Mario Biagioli, *Galileo Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 456 pp.

Paul Hoyningen-Huene, *Reconstructing Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 326 pp.

The University of Chicago Press is one of the foremost publishers of innovative works in the history and philosophy of science. It published the *Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, a product and early summary of the neopositivist movement and, as part of it, Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, which blew that movement sky high. Kuhn addressed philosophers, historians, and sociologists, and proposed a model that blurred the divisions among them. From then on, even the most detailed historical studies—many of them published by Chicago—have had a philosophical flavor. Biagioli, for example, explains the tradition of patronage at various courts of Galileo's time, the papal court included; he shows the influence of patronage on Galileo's style, his actions, the topics he chose; and in this way, Biagioli reveals important limitations to the rules of dialectic and demonstration that Galileo also respected. Hoyningen-Huene's book, which was in its second printing weeks before the publication date, is more traditional. Applying the method of logical reconstruction to Kuhn's ideas, he arrives at a surprisingly coherent and powerful system of thought. Taken together, the two books make it clear that there is no royal path to knowledge and that both the New and the Antediluvian are needed if we want to understand the complexity of human affairs. —Paul Feyerabend

Michael Eric Dyson, *Reflecting Black: African-American Cultural Criticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 346 pp.

According to Dyson, the academy and politicians—not to mention Southern Baptists—have refused to acknowledge diversity within the black community, for “to do so would complicate the progressive-versus-conservative conflict.” Following William James's maxim that “in order to believe, one must be at the disposal of circumstances that lead to belief,” Dyson refuses to serve up more “SOS” (“Same Old Stuff”). Instead, he proposes an “oppositional African-American cultural criticism,” which would hold that “racial identity is not exhausted by genetic inheritance,” that “identity is socially and culturally constructed from the raw materials of the individual and social, the private and public, and the domestic and civic.” In this way, Dyson resists essentializing modes of expression, particularly the reduction of black culture to a response to oppression and racism, and offers substantive explorations of, for example, rap culture, black nationalism, affirmative action, and contemporary gospel music.

—Robert Nelsen