

THOUGHT AND ACTION IN WILLIAM JAMES

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This is to certify that the

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ABSTRACT

THOUGHT AND ACTION IN WILLIAM JAMES

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The purpose of this study is largely confined to an analysis of William James's concept of experience. In explicating the meaning of "experience," most aspects of James's philosophy are discussed: the philosophy of mind, the theory of knowledge, the nature of reality, and value theory, to speak in the broadest terms. In analyzing the nature of thought, the structure of belief, and human action, for example, the major focal point of this study is James's first, and greatest, work--The Principles of Psychology (1890). It is argued that James's later, more popular works can be better understood in light of James's Principles. Furthermore, it is the writer's view that James's philosophy is far more structured than is generally supposed and that many of the attacks upon James's characteristic doctrines are not fatal to his philosophical position.

James was, to use his own terms, both "tough-minded" and "tender-minded." His tough-mindedness, however, has been virtually neglected. This study endeavors to place James more securely in the tradition of empirical science, while at the same time fully acknowledging his tender-mindedness. His psycho-religious interests have been widely written about

elsewhere. No attempt is made here to add to that aspect of James's thought and character.

In Chapter One, James's psychology is discussed from the point of view of the impact of the theory of evolution upon his conception of intelligence and the role of thought in human experience.

In Chapter Two, James's concept of mind as a "stream of consciousness" is considered from the point of view of the five characteristics of thought which he describes. James's analysis of consciousness as a stream has had enormous influence in psychology, philosophy, literature, and educational theory. The full import of his seminal ideas is just beginning to be recognized.

In Chapter Three, the concept of experience is examined in terms of the structure of belief. The primary source is, again, the Principles. The nature of belief is also considered in light of James's theory of meaning and truth. His doctrine of the "will" or "right" to believe is considered only incidentally.

In Chapter Four, the nature of experience is defined in aesthetic terms. Unless "experience" is interpreted in connection with particular, concrete, experience, it is vague to the point of being virtually meaningless. In the fewest words, an "aesthetic experience" possesses form. Such experiences are the ground of all learning and purposive action--or, to use James's term, "reactive behavior."

In Chapter Five, the last, James's educational theories are considered: the "principles" of learning as well as the nature and value of what is learned. However else his theories have been construed, an attempt is made here to show that in basic outlook, James's aims were not essentially different from the classical view of education for humanitas. In his brief addresses and lectures on educational subjects, James anticipated many of the problems that continue to face us today. His "Ph. D. Octopus," for example, is very timely.

In his own time, James was acknowledged to be one of the greatest intellectuals in Europe and America. But as important as James was in his own time, the full import of his teachings is just beginning to be recognized in ours. Without doubt, the figure of James shall once again dominate the intellectual scene. For those who are interested in following the course of Jamesian scholarship, an extensive bibliography is included.

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To  
MAIJA AND DAVID

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## INTRODUCTION

To understand William James requires something more than open-mindedness and intellectual acumen. As L. P. Jacks so brilliantly put it, "it requires a degree of imagination sufficient to carry us into a world where language conveys a set of values certainly other, and perhaps richer, than are implied by the ordinary use of philosophical terms."<sup>1</sup> If one is to understand James, one must approach him aesthetically, not analytically. James was impatient of logic-chopping and dry, formal reasoning. Because of this, some commentators have concluded that he was "at best little more than a brilliant and slightly irresponsible amateur"<sup>2</sup> in philosophical matters. By temperament James was an artist; however, it was the problems of men which preoccupied him as a psychologist and philosopher. In bringing us to understand those problems, he makes us see them in the same way that a great poet, like Sophocles, makes us see life in dramatic terms. And surely, James's vision of life is noble and heroic and tragic in the classical sense. Perhaps for such reasons as these, William Barrett has pointed out that it is more appropriate to speak of James as an existentialist rather than a pragmatist.<sup>3</sup> The question of how we are to classify James is not, however, very important. What really

matters is whether or not we understand him. And, as Jacks wrote, "We cannot refute him by hawking and pecking at the meaning of his words. We must penetrate to the moving spirit of the whole, or give it up."<sup>4</sup> In the briefest terms, then, the purpose of this work is to study the heart of James's philosophy: to see and to feel what gives it perennial life and lasting value.

James attempted to deal with the fundamental questions of philosophy in terms of relatively few concepts. Perhaps his most important single contribution was his concept of experience. His whole output as a psychologist and philosopher can be viewed as a set of variations on a single theme: Experience. The purpose of this study is largely confined to the analysis of James's concept of experience as it is described to us with reference to the nature of thought, the formation of beliefs, and the conduct of life. In attempting to unpack the meaning of "experience," we are inevitably led into a discussion of most aspects of James's philosophy: the philosophy of mind, the theory of knowledge, the nature of reality, and value theory, to speak in the broadest terms. But the main purpose of this study is not to offer another exposition of these several aspects of James's thought--i.e., to state his characteristic views on pragmatism, radical empiricism, the will to believe, religious experience, and so on. Rather, the main purpose here is to analyze and describe those ideas which found expression in James's first, and greatest work,--The Principles of Psychology. To a great

extent, the Principles is the foundation upon which James built his philosophy. And without an awareness of the relationship between the Principles and his other works, one may easily believe that James's philosophy is built like a house of cards: a random thing, without much structure or design, which may fall with the first breath of criticism.

In Chapter One, James's psychology is discussed from the point of view of the impact of the theory of evolution upon his conception of intelligence and the role of thought in human experience. For James, mind or intelligence is "a fighter for ends." All thought is for the sake of action. It is goal-oriented and value-centered.

In Chapter Two, the concept of experience is examined with reference to James's analysis of the five characteristics of the stream of consciousness. In exploring the nature of consciousness, James anticipated many of his later, more characteristic, doctrines--e.g., his pragmatic theory of meaning, and his radical empiricism. Either directly or indirectly, James's account of the "mental life" has permeated and given shape to the views of countless others. For example, in literature, his views have influenced the stream of consciousness "movement" associated with James Joyce and others. In educational theory, his views have had an enormous impact on the thinking of men like Dewey, Kilpatrick, Rugg, and such movements as "the child-centered school" and "progressive education." In psychology, Thorndike and MacDougall, to mention but two writers, are deeply

indebted to James. His influence upon gestalt psychologists is just beginning to be appreciated. In philosophy, his influence upon phenomenology and existentialism has received considerable attention recently. Most of the insights and problems which have given rise to this flurry of new interest can be traced to James's analysis of the stream of consciousness.

In Chapter Three, the concept of experience is examined with reference to the nature or structure of belief. The primary source is, again, James's Principles of Psychology. Many of the difficulties which have occupied scholars for decades concerning James's "will to believe," perhaps could have been avoided had his doctrine of belief been examined from the point of view of his earlier statement in the Principles. A belief, for James, is a plan for action, a "set," or disposition to behave in a given way appropriate to the exigencies of the situation. Many beliefs may be construed in terms of habits. Other beliefs are the product of intelligent design and conscious volition. However, unless one is prepared to act in some appropriate way with reference to a given situation, he may be said not to believe anything in particular. The meaning of any statement, is construed in terms of the way that one is prepared to act. The "truth" of a statement depends upon whether or not our expectations in a given case are satisfied. Because James's theory of meaning and truth has been the source of much misunderstanding, a careful attempt is made to examine his

views in light of his empiricism. This side of James--his "tough-mindedness"--has been virtually neglected. The endeavor of this study is to place James's theory of belief --and so his theory of meaning and truth as well--more securely in the tradition of empirical science. His psycho-religious interests have been widely written about elsewhere. No attempt is made here to add to that aspect of James's thought and character.

In Chapter Four, the nature of experience is defined in aesthetic terms. Unless "experience" is interpreted in connection with particular experiences, it is vague to the point of being virtually meaningless. When James writes about experience, he often writes of "pure experience." This is his term for that elusive, ineffable, "neutral stuff" out of which an experience is realized. "Pure experience" is a metaphysical concept which names nothing in particular. What makes learning possible, is having particular, concrete experiences. And such experiences are characteristically "aesthetic experiences,"--that is, they possess form. Only when raw experience takes shape in some mind as an experience, is it possible to learn anything.

In the last chapter, we consider James's educational theories: the "principles" of learning as well as the nature and value of what is learned. James attempted to reach a wide audience of teachers and laymen. Consequently, his popular lectures and addresses are written in easy, familiar language with everyday examples. While no one could fail to

be inspired by James's presentation, we cannot be at all sure that he was universally understood. James's philosophy of education is in the tradition of individualism and romanticism. He extols the virtues of human effort and great achievement. In basic outlook, his aims were not different from the classical view of education for humanitas. For James, the highest aim of education is human excellence in all things. In more concrete terms, the aim of education is to be able to recognize a good man when you see him; and to be able to help yourself out of a new situation when confronted by a problem.

When one reads James, one is struck with the impression that his works are timeless. Even in those passages in his Principles where he has been shown to be wrong, he had something important to say. He gave us a new way of looking at things. As John J. McDermott has written, "With James, the philosophical enterprise begins anew, for if one is imbued with his viewpoint, nothing is seen in quite the same way again."<sup>5</sup> If this present study succeeds in its aims, one should see James in a different light.

In his own time, James was regarded as the representative American philosopher. He was acknowledged to be one of the greatest intellectuals that America has produced. The period in which he lived has even been characterized as the "Era of William James."<sup>6</sup> But as important as James was in his own time, the full import of his teachings is just beginning to

be realized in ours. Without doubt, the figure of James shall once again dominate the intellectual scene. Our only regret is that James the man will no longer walk among us.

## CHAPTER I

### JAMES'S PSYCHOLOGY OF EXPERIENCE

In 1890, at the age of forty-eight, William James published his epoch-making work, The Principles of Psychology.<sup>1</sup> Bursting upon the world like a volcanic explosion, it was immediately hailed as a work of great magnitude.<sup>2</sup> On the occasion of the centenary of James's birth, John Dewey compared it to Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding and Hume's Treatise Concerning Human Nature.<sup>3</sup> After more than half a century the Principles is still recognized as a classic. It has even been suggested that it be required study every five years for every teacher in America.<sup>4</sup> But, sadly, like many classics, the Principles is frequently mentioned, but seldom read in its entirety. Soon after its publication, James wrote a briefer, one-volume version, which became a standard text for students in psychology.<sup>5</sup> (And who will read 1400 pages of small print when he can "get by" with 400 instead!) Later, he expressed some of his ideas in a series of popular lectures, which were subsequently published in his Talks to Teachers.<sup>6</sup>

James's thought was nurtured in the dynamic milieu of evolutionary theory.<sup>7</sup> To Americans busy taming a wilderness and forging a new nation, the idea of the survival of

the fittest had a true and clear ring. The belief in the ability of the individual to care for himself and shape his own destiny was an unquestioned assumption of the typical American of the mid-nineteenth century. A deep-rooted faith in individualism and an unshakable belief in progress were supreme values which marked the careers of men and fashioned the course of American life from its beginning.<sup>8</sup>

Evolutionary theory did not, however, spring full-blown from the mind of Charles Darwin. Prior to the 19th century, biological concepts of evolution were advanced by Buffon, Lamarck, and Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of Charles. Some form of evolutionism can even be found as far back as the Greeks. Anaximander (c. 610-545), for example, held the view that living things came into being through vapors raised by the sun, and that man evolved from more elementary animal forms.<sup>9</sup> Implicit in Christian belief is a doctrine of spiritual growth or perfectionism. During the 17th and 18th centuries, philosophers wrote of the continual progress of mankind through social and cultural change.<sup>10</sup> In Darwin's time, before the actual publication of his Origin of Species, Herbert Spencer was applying evolutionary principles to all aspects of life in the universe, thus earning for himself the title "philosopher of evolution." What was for Darwin only a biological theory, became in Spencer's philosophy a metaphysical theory of progress with applications in biology, psychology, sociology, and

other areas. Its usefulness as a principle of explanation was limited only by what Spencer called the unknowable.

Like others of his time, Darwin accepted a basic belief in social progress and shared in the general optimism of the period. But Darwin's scientific contribution was of a different order. His theory was limited to an explanation of the origin of species.<sup>11</sup> James read Darwin's work and admired him as a model scientist.<sup>12</sup> But it was primarily the work of Spencer which directly influenced James most.<sup>13</sup> Briefly, then, James's Principles of Psychology was a powerful attempt to apply the concepts of evolutionary theory as he understood them to the study of the mind. And central to his evolutionary account is his view that the essence or nature of consciousness lies in its purposiveness: it is pre-eminently value-centered and goal-oriented. Mind, in short, has interests.<sup>14</sup>

James's evolutionary theory of mind, however, stands in marked contrast to the views of Spencer, according to which mind is one of the most important faculties of adjustment in an organism's struggle for survival. Spencer defined the very essence of life as "the adjustment of inner to outer relations."<sup>15</sup> And by this definition, he also meant to cover the entire process of mental evolution. But Spencer's theory was attacked by James as too passive and mechanical.<sup>16</sup> According to James, mental activity as "mere correspondence with the outer world is a notion on which it is wholly impossible to base a definition of mental action."<sup>17</sup> He

argued that Spencer's definition, to mean anything at all, must be re-written as follows: "Right or intelligent mental action consists in the establishment, corresponding to outward relations, of such inward relations and reactions as will favor the survival of the thinker, or, at least, his physical well-being."<sup>18</sup> Such a definition, according to James, is not only more precise, but it is also "frankly teleological" (emphasis added).<sup>19</sup>

I, for my part, cannot escape the consideration, forced upon me at every turn, that the knower is not simply a mirror floating with no foot-hold anywhere, and passively reflecting an order that he comes upon and finds simply existing. The knower is an actor, and co-efficient of truth on one side, whilst on the other he registers the truth which he helps to create. Mental interests, hypotheses, postulates, so far as they are bases for human action--action which to a great extent transforms the world--help to make the truth which they declare. In other words, there belongs to mind, from its birth upward, a spontaneity, a vote.<sup>20</sup>

According to James, the pursuit of ends and the choice of means for their attainment are "the mark and criterion of mentality in a phenomenon."<sup>21</sup> Presumably, any phenomenon showing evidence of deliberate behavior toward some goal would, at least in some minimal sense, manifest intelligence or mind. The problems suggested by James's criteria for the presence of mentality in a phenomenon are largely definitional in character. But one thing, at least, is clear: wherever there is (a) an end or purpose toward which an object moves, and (b) signs of deliberative choice of means productive of that end, then the phenomenon in question has

intelligence or exhibits mentality. However, while the presence of some end is a necessary condition for deciding whether a given object exhibits mentality, the teleological criterion alone is not sufficient, or even, perhaps, fundamental. For depending upon how one is to define "end," it is possible to show some end without necessarily implying any choice of means to that end.<sup>22</sup> To the extent that we behave purposively, the ends which mark us as intelligent creatures must be our ends, which we freely choose, and which choices could have been different. For having a choice implies having alternatives from which to choose. And having alternatives in turn implies having ends in mind. Making choices, then, seems to be the more fundamental criterion. For having a choice implies an end, but having an end does not necessarily imply having a choice.

The import of James's teleological requirement for mentality in a phenomenon is not then merely that there should be ends toward which our conscious activity leads. It has to do, rather, with the question of freedom to choose ends in terms of our own interests. For in acting deliberately toward ends of my own choosing, I not only exhibit intelligence, but I exercise freedom as well. Where I am not free, then I am reduced to something like a machine--an automaton whose purpose it may be to carry out the will of some other intelligent being, perhaps the Cosmos itself.<sup>23</sup>

Historically, James's theory of mind is known as functionalism. Not only does mind have a vote, but consciousness

seems to be "a fighter for ends."<sup>24</sup> The function of consciousness is to select purposes toward which an organism can direct its energies.<sup>25</sup> In a purely mechanical world there are no real ends. It is only with the introduction of consciousness at some point in evolutionary time that ends appear in the world; for consciousness is not merely a passive faculty which enables the organism to adjust to its environment. It is an instrument for effecting changes in the environment which make the world more conducive to the realization of its ends.

Most classic studies in the philosophy of mind begin with an analysis of Ideas or "thoughts" in terms of their atomic constituents.<sup>26</sup> They usually begin with simple, un-analyzable sensations, much like a house is built by "the agglutination of bricks."<sup>27</sup> Whereas such methods have the advantage of moving clearly from simple sensations to complex mental phenomena, James holds, nevertheless, that they commit us from the start to a theory that is questionable, namely, that "higher" states of consciousness are compounds of units.<sup>28</sup> James argues to the contrary that no one has ever had a simple sensation by itself. What we usually take to be a simple sensation is the result of subsequent analyses based upon selective attention. From the moment we are born, we confront "a teeming multiplicity of objects and relations."<sup>29</sup> Our dawning awareness already finds itself in medias res. Assailed by eyes, ears, nose, skin, and entrails at once, the new-born babe feels it all as

"one great blooming, buzzing, confusion."<sup>30</sup> His body is the nucleus or center around which the neutral stuff of experience flows.<sup>31</sup> And from that moment on, he attends to aspects of that stuff and identifies them as things in his world.

In the first sentence of his great work, James defines the scope of psychology in the following way: "Psychology is the Science of Mental Life, both of its phenomena and of their conditions."<sup>32</sup> Mental phenomena include such things as "feelings, desires, cognitions, reasonings, decisions, and the like."<sup>33</sup> James is anxious to admit into his theory of mind only those phenomena that can be directly experienced and observed. Hence, unlike Scholastic or Common-sense theories, which begin by postulating some simple entity--e.g., a Soul or Mind--<sup>34</sup>that has so many "facultative manifestations" which order experience and account for things, James begins with a description of the immediate data of consciousness as they appear in experience. Moreover, since mental phenomena refer to things beyond themselves,<sup>35</sup> any description of the mental life must include some account of the world of objects which appear in conscious experience. The conditions of mental life, the second part of James's definition of Psychology, refer to physical or bodily conditions. In particular, to the physiology and functions of the brain. According to James, physical experiences, long neglected by "spiritualistic" or "intellectualistic" psychologies, must be recognized as among those conditions

which support, alter, or "lead to" mental activity.<sup>36</sup> James here adopts an interactionist account of mind which interprets body- and mental-states as co-determinants or "partners" in experience.<sup>37</sup>

According to James, the study of mind must begin from within. Anyone interested in the fullness of the mental life will proceed with those facts with which he is most intimately acquainted, namely, his own thoughts and feelings. Hence one must rely "first and foremost and always" on the method of introspective observation.<sup>38</sup> When one looks into his own mind what he finds are states of consciousness. The existence of such states, in a world where most other facts have "tottered in the breath of philosophical doubt," has never been questioned by any critic, however sceptical he may have been in other respects.<sup>39</sup> Everyone believes that he can feel himself thinking, and that he can distinguish his mental states an inward activity from those objects external to him which he thinks about. This belief is "the most fundamental of all the postulates of Psychology."<sup>40</sup> Briefly, then, the first fact for psychology is that thinking of some sort goes on.<sup>41</sup> The experiencing Self is placed in the midst of the flux of things in which the fullness of conscious life is taken as the immediate datum for psychological inquiry.

While the concept of experience has long been recognized as fundamental to James's position, the nature of experience, and so of reality as well, has not been adequately

understood. In the hands of well-meaning enthusiasts and followers, James's ideas were often distorted or reduced to mere slogans.<sup>42</sup> In recent years, however, James has been enjoying a fresh examination, largely encouraged by contemporary developments in European philosophy. His place in the history of philosophy and psychology is being re-evaluated. It is already clear that most of the views which he later developed in his popular philosophical lectures were already anticipated in his great work in psychology, and in some earlier papers which were later incorporated into it. The "stream of consciousness"<sup>43</sup> is perhaps the most fundamental concept in his psychology, as well as the most famous metaphor. While, for example, the chapter on "Habit"<sup>44</sup> has enjoyed a far greater audience, James's discussion of the mental life as a stream of thought has more profound implications for contemporary philosophy, psychology, and educational theory. In Chapter 2, we shall analyze James's concept of mind as a stream and endeavor to show how in his new account of experience the knower and the known come together in a world that is neither objective nor subjective but "conceptive"--a radical new world which is, quite literally, meaningful.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

In his description of the mental life, James distinguishes five characteristics of the stream of consciousness:<sup>1</sup>

- 1) Every thought tends to be part of a personal consciousness.
- 2) Within each personal consciousness thought is always changing.
- 3) Within each personal consciousness thought is sensibly continuous.
- 4) It always appears to deal with objects independent of itself.
- 5) It is interested in some parts of these objects to the exclusion of others, and welcomes or rejects--chooses from among them, in a word--all the while.<sup>2</sup>

Let us consider each of these characteristics in turn.

First, thoughts are essentially private. Whereas we are directly acquainted with our own thoughts and feelings, only by inference can we know about mental states in others. Thoughts belong to some personal consciousness which owns them.<sup>3</sup> "In this room--this lecture-room, say--there are a multitude of thoughts, yours and mine. . . . Whether anywhere in the room there be a mere thought, which is nobody's thought, we have no means of ascertaining, for we have no experience of its like. The only states of consciousness that we naturally

deal with are found in personal consciousness, minds, selves, concrete particular I's and you's."<sup>4</sup>

James's emphasis on thoughts "belonging" to some personal consciousness or Self has to do with the notion of privacy, not property. Each "mind" has its own thoughts; but it keeps them, necessarily, to itself. I know my mind directly, and you know yours. But neither of us can know the other's mind in the way that we know our own. I cannot inspect your mind, nor you mine. The "gap" between minds is the most absolute gap in nature: "Absolute insulation, irreducible pluralism, is the law."<sup>5</sup> On these terms, then, it is the Self-as-thinker that is the ultimate datum. Not thought or feeling abstractly conceived. The ultimate fact for psychology is the almost-Cartesian "I think" and "I feel."<sup>6</sup>

We might well ask at this point how communication between "thought-systems" (personal consciousnesses) is possible if it is true, and James certainly thinks so, that such systems are absolutely insulated. Are we not bound to the immediacy and privacy of our own thoughts and sensations? May it not be the case that all we can know are our own thoughts? Am I not, in fact, absolutely alone in an ever-changing world which happens to be my thought-of-the-moment, my present experience?<sup>7</sup> Such questions are not merely rhetorical. They are quite central to a number of important problems. However, before we can attempt to consider them, we must first turn to the second aspect of thought, namely, that thought is in constant flux or change. Thought flows.

When James says that thought is always changing, he wants it understood that he does not mean that a given state of consciousness is without duration or "shape" or its own. Rather, he means that no state of consciousness can make a second appearance before the mind, so to speak, in identically the same shape it possessed initially. Time and change--experience, in short--make a difference. Thoughts mellow, change their character, blend with one another, take on greater interest, or become less interesting. The change which James has in view is that which takes place in sensible intervals of time. And the result on which he lays stress is that no state once gone can recur and be identical with what it was before.<sup>8</sup> What is, or may be experienced more than once, is the same object: "We hear the same note over and over again; we see the same quality of green or smell the same objective perfume, or experience the same species of pain. The realities, concrete and abstract, physical and ideal, whose permanent existence we believe in, seem to be constantly coming up again before our thought, and lead us, in our carelessness, to suppose that our 'ideas' of them are the same ideas."<sup>9</sup>

If we were to attend to the matter carefully, we would see that our experiences are never the same, although objects of consciousness may remain identical over an indefinite period of time. That this is the case may be seen in the fact that we never have pure, absolute sensations. That is, we can never experience a sensation by itself. Sensations

are always experienced in clusters, in relation to other sensations. For example, when everything is dark a grayish object appears white, and when everything is light a grayish object appears dark. We feel things differently depending on whether we are sleepy or wide awake, hungry or full, tired or rested, hot or cold, and above all, according to James, we feel things differently in childhood, manhood, and old age.<sup>10</sup> Briefly, then, object-experiences vary as the contexts in which experiences of objects change. And to the extent that object-experiences change, our ideas of what the world is like also change. In James's inimitable language, "A permanently existing 'idea' or 'Vorstellung' which makes its appearance before the footlights of consciousness at periodical intervals, is as mythological an entity as the Jack of Spades (James's emphasis)."<sup>11</sup>

James's argument for the view that object-experiences are never the same rests on another assumption, based upon physiology: "Every thought we have of a given fact is, strictly speaking, unique, and only bears a resemblance of kind with our other thoughts of the same fact. When the identical fact recurs, we must think of it in a fresh manner, see it under a somewhat different angle, apprehend it in different relations from those in which it last appeared. And the thought by which we cognize it is the thought of it-in-those-relations, a thought suffused with the consciousness of all that dim context."<sup>12</sup> In short, according to James, every object-experience corresponds to some modification in

the brain. For an identical object-experience to recur, it would have to occur the second time in an unmodified brain.<sup>13</sup> But, says James, this is a physiological impossibility. Therefore, an unmodified object-experience is also an impossibility.<sup>14</sup>

Given such a state-of-affairs, what of the notion of personal identity? How is it that a personal consciousness can know itself if, by hypothesis, no two states of consciousness are ever the same? On James's interpretation, what sense does it make to even suppose that the "real" Self is anything but my present state of mind? The answer would probably be "No sense": However, this would be so only where we reduce thought to immediate sensation and then sensation to some simple, elementary, atomistic feeling-state.<sup>15</sup> As we have seen, sensations do not come to us pure and simple. They come in bundles combined into "things." And while a given experience as a whole is always different from any other experience, it does not follow that all of the ingredients of a given experience are necessarily different from all of the ingredients of another (perhaps similar) experience. Many of them may be the same. If it were the case that every experience was absolutely unique--i.e., that between two experiences there were no common characteristics--then it would make no sense to even talk about two experiences being similar. But not only do we talk sensibly about similar experiences, we live through them. For example, while, strictly speaking, I am a different person today than

I was yesterday,<sup>16</sup> I am not a totally different person. I wake up and prepare to do what I had planned the day before. My past has not changed, it is only being added to. It is I who go to court to face criminal charges for a crime I committed weeks before, and it is the same I, viz., myself, who expects punishment if found guilty and convicted. And so on. In short, I connect my past states with my present states and experience them as continuous with one another.

It has already been said that James held the view that the gap between personal consciousnesses was the most absolute gap in nature. For whereas I know my own mind directly, I can only know about your mind indirectly. I can never feel your thoughts or states of consciousness as I can feel my own. In a celebrated passage, James said:

When Paul and Peter wake up in the same bed, and recognize that they have been asleep, each one of them mentally reaches back and makes connection with but one of the two streams of thought which were broken by the sleeping hours. As the current of an electrode buried in the ground unerringly finds its way to its own similarly buried mate, across no matter how much intervening earth; so Peter's present instantly finds out Peter's past, and never by mistake knits itself on to that of Paul. Paul's thought in turn is as little liable to go astray. The past thought of Peter is appropriated by the present Peter alone. He may have a knowledge, and a correct one too, of what Paul's last drowsy states of mind were as he sank into sleep, but it is an entirely different sort of knowledge from that which he has of his own last states. He remembers his own states, whilst he only conceives Paul's. Remembrance is like direct feeling; its object is suffused with a warmth and intimacy to which no object of mere conception ever attains. . . . This community of self is what the time-gap cannot break in twain, and is why a present thought, although not ignorant of

the time-gap, can still regard itself as continuous with certain chosen portions of the past.

Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as 'chain' or 'train' do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life.<sup>17</sup>

In the strictest sense, then, two minds can never identify with each other.<sup>18</sup> They can never enjoy an intimate relationship in the sense of being directly acquainted. For no mind can be looked-into from without. Each lives in the private world of its own experience.

In consciousness, thoughts flow and appear to be continuous. James defines "continuous" as that which is without breach, crack, or division.<sup>19</sup> Given this definition, how does it bear upon the proposition that thought is sensibly continuous?<sup>20</sup> Descartes, for example, also held that thought is continuous. Further, he even believed that if thought were to cease for a moment, the soul would also cease to exist: ergo, for Descartes, thought never takes a holiday.<sup>21</sup> But does James mean to imply, like Descartes, that we are always conscious, or that there is never a time when thought stops, to take up again at some later time? No, on the contrary. James holds that breaches in consciousness do occur. In some cases we may not be aware of such gaps, but in others we may. In those cases where we do not feel gaps--for example, in states of unconsciousness brought about by blows on the head--, consciousness simply picks up where it left

off without any inkling of what transpired during its absence. But there are other experiences which create real interruptions and which we feel as such; for example, a loud explosion breaking the evening calm, or a sudden shock. Experiences in which there seems to be a separateness of "parts" or "links" and which words like "chain" or "train" seem to describe naturally. How then are such experiences accounted for by the concept of consciousness as an unbroken stream?

In order to answer the question, one must keep in mind the distinction between thoughts and the things which are thought about. Things are discrete and discontinuous: first there is the calm, and then there is the loud explosion. But the contrast is not experienced as a break in the stream of thought any more than the calm/explosion is a break in the time-flow in which they occur. James says:

A silence may be broken by a thunder-clap, and we may be so stunned and confused for a moment by the shock as to give no instant account to ourselves of what has happened. But that very confusion is a mental state, and a state that passes us straight over from the silence to the sound. The transition between the thought of one object and the thought of another is no more a break in the thought than a joint in a bamboo is a break in the wood. It is a part of the consciousness as much as the joint is a part of the bamboo.<sup>22</sup>

Only after superficial introspection would we report that we heard a thunder-clap. A deeper examination would reveal not only an awareness of the thunder, but also an awareness of the calm which came before. What we hear when the thunder

breaks is not thunder-all-by-itself, but "thunder-breaking-upon-silence-and-contrasting-with-it."<sup>23</sup> And this experience would be quite different from an awareness of another experience in which the same objective thunder was but a continuation of previous thunder. Briefly, then, our awareness of a given phenomenon is conditioned by our awareness of its antecedents. But temporal antecedents are not the only factors which enter into our awareness. For, according to James, we have some awareness, however slight, of our own body--its position, attitude, condition--which also accompanies and contributes to our knowledge of a given phenomenon.<sup>24</sup> One reason why we are seldom fully aware of all these various factors has to do with the way language works against our perception of the total reality. For example, "thunder" simply names thunder, and "gray" names gray, irrespective of the contexts in which thunder and gray are experienced. But from the point of view of the individual who hears thunder, it means something different as it occurs in different contexts and at different times. Mere dictionary-type definitions are impoverished as compared to felt meanings which are lived through in experience.

The felt impact of thunder-breaking-calm is possible only because thought is sensibly continuous. At a given instant, our awareness of things carries with it an echo of the previous moment, as well as an awareness of some anticipated state. Our present thought included the whence and the whither of both past and future states. Thoughts are

never had singly, nor do they appear suddenly and then leave without a trace. As new states come, the inertia of old states modifies them accordingly.<sup>25</sup>

The stream of consciousness, to use James's illustration, is like the alternation of flights and perchings in the life of a bird. Even the flow of language seems to express this; for thoughts are expressed in sentences, and sentences are closed by periods. The times of closure (perchings) are usually filled with images of some sort that can be contemplated for a time before they change or fade away. The movements (flights) toward closure are filled with thoughts of relations that, for the most part, pertain to those matters contemplated in periods of closure or rest. James calls the places of closure the "substantive parts," and the movements toward closure the "transitive parts" of the stream of consciousness. Transitive parts lead us from one substantive state to another. Accordingly, all thought tends toward the attainment of some substantive state other than the one from which we took flight.<sup>26</sup>

The problem of trying to catch our thoughts in flight is a little like taking hold of a spinning top to catch its motion, or turning on the light quickly to see how the darkness looks. If the transitive parts are flights toward substantive parts, then to stop them in mid-flight is to annihilate them, or to turn them into substantive parts. Although it is difficult, introspectively, to analyze the transitive parts, such parts, nevertheless, do exist.

However, too frequently according to James, such difficulties have led philosophers to deny the existence of transitive parts and, consequently, emphasize all the more the substantive ones. Unable to catch hold of the feelings of relation and forms of connection between the facts of the world, which characterize the transitive parts, philosophers, like Hume, have denied that feelings of relation exist--not only relations in the mind, but most relations out of the mind as well. Rather than viewing the mental life as a continuous flow, Hume sees it as only a bundle or collection of different perceptions which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, like bullets shot out of a gun.<sup>27</sup>

No philosophy should contain within it more than is real. But, conversely, no philosophy should deny reality to things even where such things are elusive and baffling. According to James, the traditional sensationalist and intellectualist philosophies of mind have either failed to recognize the existence, or take into account the importance of, the cognitive aspects of unnamed feeling-states in the life of the mind. There are countless states of feeling all different from each other but alike in that they have no names. The feeling of a word may be there--its rhythm and place--but not the word itself. Our vain effort to recall it is frustrating. The taste of wine remembered is different from the taste of wine sipped. Again, there are differences between experiences enjoyed for the first time and the same

experiences recognized as having been enjoyed before. We feel differences but we cannot always say what they are.

Let us consider what these inarticulate feeling-states are like. Take, for example, the following: "Wait!" "Look!" and "Listen!" In each case, although no definite object is in mind, our state of consciousness is different. We assume a different attitude of expectancy as we successively hear the three commands. Similarly with the interrogatives, "Who?" "When?" and "Where?" Their felt meaning is surely more than their difference of sound. We feel a sense of direction, or anticipate some positive object, yet no object is before us. These different states of expectancy are subjectively real but remain nameless. Try to recall a forgotten name. Our state of consciousness is not one of emptiness because we have no definite object in mind. We are intensely active, searching. Perhaps someone proposes the names Tom, Dick, and Harry. After each proposal we reply, "No, I have some other name in mind. I'll recognize it when you say it." In short, we say that we know what names do not fit, but we cannot recall the one that does. We have a feeling for the object, but cannot bring it into conscious awareness. It seems as though two different states are simultaneously present: one, a state of knowing what is not the case; the other, a state of feeling what is the case. The states expressed by "His name is on the tip of my tongue . . . I know it" and "I know his name is not Harry" are different, but both are real. That we do not have names to

indicate these differences only points to the fact that our language is inadequate to name the differences that do exist. But such namelessness, according to James, is not incompatible with existence.<sup>28</sup>

The point of much of James's discussion here is that traditional psychologies recognize only definite images, the substantive parts of experience, which form but the smallest part of experience as it is actually lived.

The traditional psychology talks like one who should say a river consists of nothing but pailsful, spoonsful, quartsful, barrelsful, and other moulded forms of water. Even were the pails and the pots all actually standing in the stream, still between them the free water would continue to flow. It is just this free water of consciousness that psychologists resolutely overlook. Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. With it goes the sense of its relations, near and remote, the dying echo of whence it came to us, the value, of the image is all in this halo or penumbra that surrounds and escorts it, --or rather that is fused into one with it and has become bone of its bone and flesh of its flesh; leaving it, it is true, an image of the same thing it was before, but making it an image of that thing newly taken and freshly understood.<sup>29</sup>

As was the case with feelings of relations (transitive states), feelings of tendency also play an important part in conceptual thought. But feelings are not chaotic and without direction. They center upon a nucleus, topic, image, or thing, and give it meaning. A thing is what it means, but its meaning cannot be separated from its feeling-states or halo of fringes.

Feeling-states are always associated with consciousness of things (substantive states) as a kind of halo, psychic

overtone, suffusion, or fringe around them. It is like a given musical note which sounds different as it is played by a clarinet or oboe. The almost-imperceptible overtones color the same note differently because each instrument gives more than just that note, viz., the upper harmonics being different, they enable us to distinguish the instruments. But the harmonics are not usually heard separately: they blend with the note, change its quality, and so it is heard differently. In each case we hear the same note, say A-440, but what is different, and so of interest, is that we hear and recognize that it is played by an oboe or a clarinet. Even so our mental life: "the waxing and waning brain-processes at every moment blend with and suffuse and alter the psychic effect of the processes which are at their culminating point."<sup>30</sup>

The important thing about a stream of thought is the substantive state toward which it is moving--its conclusion: that state is its "topic," as James calls it.<sup>31</sup> In all our purposive thinking there is some topic or subject that is the point toward which thought is directed or the nucleus around which our conscious states center or focus. Many topics are concerned with problems, the solutions of which are frustrated by "gaps" we cannot yet fill. Definite images, words, or phrases, elude us; but, nevertheless, the vague, shadowy phantoms of feeling of the right word or image encourage us into active, intense, searching which leads to a determinate state or solution. The determinate thought, or topic, is the thing. The gap is the thing-before-cognition-felt-in-a-

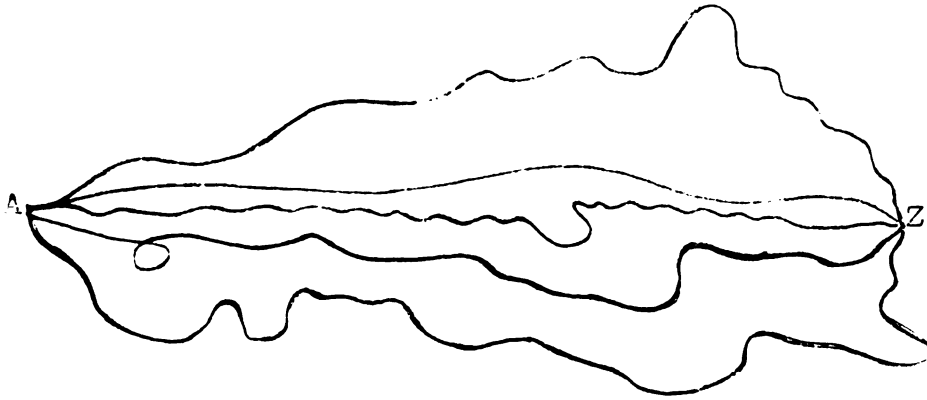
fringe-of-relations. But the gap is not empty or ineffectual, it is the thing itself uncognized. It is that something, or someone, or somewhere, which gives our thought direction and focus. But it is also the great "X" which passes judgment upon images or phrases as they flash into awareness: it is the X which rejects those candidates who do not answer to it and recognizes those that do. The act of recognition is insight or intuition. What is seen or intuited is a meaning. Meaning, then, is feeling objectified in thought.

The topic of thought is like a resting-place: a feeling of satisfaction or a sense of conclusion.<sup>32</sup> Usually it is a word or phrase or image, which resolves a problem or fills a troublesome gap. Sometimes, it is the image of the "form" of an opera, play, book, or even a philosophical system, which lingers in our minds and on which we pass judgment when the actual work is over.<sup>33</sup> The meaning of every note in a symphony (as well as the rests) is related to every other note. On the basis of what went before, we anticipate what follows. Every moment of the work is meaningful as it is actually listened to. But the greatest meaning is the sense of grasping its totality, its thingness, all at once.<sup>34</sup>

For James, the meaning of a given stream lies not in the means to a conclusion, but in the conclusion itself. Means exist for the sake of meanings, or ends. What difference does it make, he asks, if the means to some end are different: "the means may be as mutable as we like, for the 'meaning' of the stream of thought will be the same."<sup>35</sup>

James argues the relative unimportance of the means from the fact that when we reach a conclusion, we have usually forgotten most of the steps which led up to it. Most succinctly stated, his argument runs as follows: "The practical upshot of a book we read remains with us, though we may not recall one of its sentences."<sup>36</sup> But such simplistic treatment of an important point is misleading and dangerous. James would never sanction any means for the sake of a given end, nor would he claim that every end is worthy of consummation. But these questions raise moral issues which do not directly concern us here.

A clear but rather trivial example from arithmetic, may better reveal what James's point is. Let us assume that the thing in mind, the conclusion of our train of thought (however short), is "4."<sup>37</sup> We may arrive at the same "state" or conclusion via different operations: some laborious and mechanical; others more perspicuous or intuitive. For example, " $1 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 4$ " and " $5 - 1 = 4$ " and " $2 \times 2 = 4$ " and " $4 = 4$ " are identical in meaning, even where the operations are different. In each case, the particular expression is different, but the meaning is the same, viz., "4." James's own example is more interesting, but involves greater complications. A diagram may help illustrate James's point that where the end is the same, the mental means are unimportant or indifferent.



(Figure after James, Principles, I, 269.)

Let A be the substantive state from which five thinkers take flight toward Z, another substantive state. Each thinker takes a different path. "One gets to the conclusion by one line, another by another; one follows a course of English, another of German, verbal imagery. With one, visual images predominate; with another, tactile. Some trains are tinged with emotion, others not; some are very abridged, synthetic and rapid, others, hesitating and broken into many steps. But when the penultimate terms of all the trains, however differing inter se, finally shoot into the same conclusion, we say and rightly say, that all the thinkers have had substantially the same thought."<sup>38</sup>

If Tom takes the shortest and Harry the longest path, where both paths lead to Z, there is no difference between one path and the other regarding ends, only the means. Given, for example, that Tom and Harry are both logicians, Tom is



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judged to be better than Harry for the reason, simply, that his path is shorter, i.e., indicates an economy of means, or mental effort, which is the mark of a "good" logician. James's point is that where such economy may be prized among logicians, it is only one kind of value. The economy of means, although otherwise valued, is irrelevant to the quality of the conclusion. The fact is that both Tom and Harry reach the same point.

The language of means and ends is unfortunate, for it suggests a duality in which means are subordinated to ends. But means and ends are not different in kind, they are ways of talking about the same continuous process of thought. When we talk about processes, we tend to emphasize the substantive states and neglect the transitive ones. We tend to become more interested in the thought cognized than in the process of cognition. When, for example, we talk about the "products" of logical thought, i.e., formal proofs and demonstrations, we overlook the actual processes which lead up to them. And those processes seldom, if ever, resemble the formal product. In our interest in ends we usually fail to take account of all those fringe-relationships of the transitive states which are the truly important elements in the study of thought processes. When we review, for example, the notes of some memorable lecture, all that remains of the fullness of that occasion are naked thoughts, unadorned meanings. With the passage of time, the halo of

fringes disappears and feelings desiccate. All that remains of the total experience are dry meanings encapsulated in symbols.

The means/end relationship bears upon James's pragmatism. His position here is an early statement of his pragmatic theory of meaning. Essentially, the meaning of any idea, concept, or, more generally, proposition, lies in its practical consequences. By "practical consequences," James means concrete facts of experience, real effects. The pragmatic method is a way of settling questions by reference to consequent not antecedent conditions or phenomena. For example, given that two propositions, p and q, lead to the same consequences, they mean the same thing. Regardless of how they may be stated, they are the same proposition. If, however, neither p nor q lead to any observable consequences they are practically meaningless. They mean nothing in particular as far as our future conduct or action is concerned.

Educational methods which concentrate mainly upon the presentation of mere facts, or which deal primarily in abstractions, may teach something. But facts alone are poor fare compared to the feast which experience affords. In experience thought is suffused with all the fringe relationships of the transitive states which give the moment of learning a value and meaning far more rich and interesting than the meaning of the substantive states alone. We may know about things perfectly well in thought. But if we are

not also acquainted with them in experience, a world of feeling (reality) is lost.

Because of a deep-rooted belief stemming from ancient times, man has been differentiated from other creatures by his reason. Indeed, the standard definition of man is "rational animal." As a consequence of this belief, traditional educational methods have been primarily concerned with the education of man for the life of reason or spiritual activity. The life of the body was for the most part overlooked or systematically denied. From the Neo-platonic-Christian tradition we even received the view that the body was the prison of the soul. The very poverty of our language regarding feeling-states or emotions can be partly attributed to this neglect and sometimes contempt of our "earthly" selves. James's emphasis in his psychology on the importance of the life of the body--its feeling-states--is a healthy corrective to the austerity and one-sidedness of the past.<sup>39</sup>

Up to this point, we have been primarily concerned with the stream of consciousness from the point of view of the subject who thinks. We must now consider more carefully the nature of the object of consciousness. According to James, "Human thought appears to deal with objects independent of itself; that is, it is cognitive, or possesses the function of knowing."<sup>40</sup> Thoughts, in other words, are about things.<sup>41</sup> James is concerned here with the problem of the intentionality of consciousness, thought, or mind.<sup>42</sup> In the broadest terms, this is the view that mind cannot be conceived

independently of the world which appears to it. Consciousness is **always** consciousness of . . . . Consequently, any analysis of mind necessarily entails an analysis of extramental facts, i.e., the world, or some aspect of it, as thought's object.<sup>43</sup>

According to James, the reason why we believe that objects exist independently of particular subjects, is that there **are** or **may** be **many** thoughts **about** the **same** object. For example, an indefinite number of individuals **may** **each** have in mind the **same** object, say, the flight of Apollo 11. In this case, there were, undoubtedly, millions of thoughts, but only one flight. It would be **absurd** to suppose that there were **as many** flights of Apollo 11 as there were individuals who had in mind that flight to the moon. The judgment that my thought and your thought are both of the same object, is a claim about some aspect of reality that is independent of either of us. Therefore, we can agree that we have the same object in mind when we can enumerate and compare its characteristics and find that they agree in all essential points.

When I think of a given object on more than one occasion, what is it that entitles me to believe that it is the same object that I have in mind? James's answer is curious. By a sort of triangulation I project the given object into an independent position from which it appears to both my past and present thoughts. In some way or other, I compare my thoughts of the given object with the object so projected and directly see that they are the same. This sense of

sameness or identity is "the very keel and backbone of our thinking."<sup>44</sup> By this, James means that sameness is a primitive datum of experience. As in the case of the logical Principle of Identity, sameness can neither be demonstrated nor reduced to simpler terms. It is the basic given upon which all our knowledge about things is subsequently constructed.

Our ideas of realities outside of thought grow out of repeated experiences with objects that appear to us to be the same. To the extent that individuals can reach agreement regarding appearances, we have reason to believe in the existence of external objects. Where a report is given by one individual, but cannot be verified publicly, we tend to disregard it as a report of some extra-mental fact and consider it to be only a private hallucination. Where our reports do concur, we take them to be indicative of some external reality which is the same for all of us and which exists independently as a discrete object.

Without repeated experiences of the same object, it is doubtful that the question of reality being extra-mental would even arise. James asks us to consider the case of an altogether unprecedented experience, for example, a new taste in the throat. At this point, the question whether it is a subjective quality of feeling, or an objective quality felt, does not even arise. It is, James says, simply that taste. But in describing my sensation to a doctor, he may say that I have heartburn. At this point,

my particular sensation is identified with a quality already existent extra mentem tuam, which I in turn have come to know in experiencing it.<sup>45</sup> In speaking of how children come to know about things, James says:

The first spaces, times, things, qualities, experienced by the child probably appear, like the first heartburn, in this absolute way, as simple beings, neither in nor out of thought. But later, by having other thoughts than this present one, and making repeated judgments of sameness among their objects, he corroborates in himself the notion of realities, past and distant as well as present, which realities no one single thought either possesses or engenders, but which all may contemplate and know.<sup>46</sup>

Here, James seems to anticipate his later doctrine of pure experience. According to this view, reality is neither mental nor physical. It is neutral. The subsequent classification of things into mental or physical categories is something we learn. For James, "mind" and "matter," so to speak, are not the irreducible metaphysical substances of a Descartes. On the contrary, they are, if you will, but two ways of talking about the same reality, or neutral stuff of experience. Hence "mind-talk" and "body-talk" have, for James, a functional or practical value, not a metaphysical one.

The ultimate nature of reality may be forever beyond us. If for no other reason, it would be gross egotism to suppose that mortal men should know with certainty the final, absolute truth about the nature of things. We do well even to judge truly some fact about ourselves. From James's point of view, the judgment, "X is real," says very little

about X, but is indicative of a great deal about what men take to be real. That you and I happen to agree that X is \_\_\_\_ reveals something about the workings of our minds. Something, called X, appears to both of us and we take it to be the same. X presents itself before our minds, but we give it a name and appoint it some value. Whatever X may happen to be in itself is a question the answer to which will forever elude us. Such questions, from a positivistic point of view are no questions at all. They only lead to pseudo-problems and metaphysical dead-ends. Not only can we not know the real thing in itself, we can never be sure whether there is any real sameness in things which appear to us. James's principle of constancy only lays it down that the mind makes continual use of the notion of sameness, and if deprived of it, would have a different structure from what it has.<sup>47</sup> What is taken to be the same is the meaning of things, not necessarily the things themselves. This is what James says:

The mind must conceive as possible that the Same should be before it, for our experience to be the sort of thing it is. Without the psychological sense of identity, sameness might rain down upon us from the outer world for ever and we be none the wiser. With the psychological sense, on the other hand, the outer world might be an unbroken flux, and yet we would perceive a repeated experience. Even now, the world may be a place in which the same thing never did and never will come twice. The thing we mean to point at may change from top to bottom and we be ignorant of the fact. But in our meaning itself we are not deceived; our intention is to think of the same. The name which I have given to the principle, in calling it the law of constancy in our meanings, accentuates its subjective character,

and justifies us in laying it down as the most important of all the features of our mental structure.

Not all psychic life need be assumed to have the sense of sameness developed in this way. In the consciousness of worms and polyps, though the same realities may frequently impress it, the feeling of sameness may seldom emerge. We, however, running back and forth, like spiders on the web they weave, feel ourselves to be working over identical materials and thinking them in different ways. And the man who identifies the materials most is held to have the most philosophic human mind.<sup>48</sup>

In our encounter with the real world, we may never know anything with absolute assurance. But we no doubt believe that we can mean the same thing when we so intend. This is the point of James's principle of constancy. And in meaning the Same, things come into being and are what we experience them to be.<sup>49</sup> Beyond this, it is fruitless to go into the question whether or not what we experience is really real.

We ordinarily tend to think of the object of thought as a discrete thing without reference to our knowledge of it. When we say, for example, "Columbus discovered America in 1492," most people would agree that the object in mind is Columbus, or America, or, possibly, the discovery of America. That is, we identify the object of thought with some kernel or portion of the total stream of thought. Usually, we identify it with the grammatical subject of a sentence. In James's terms, we tend to identify the object of thought with the "topic" or nucleus toward which the stream of thought is directed--i.e., some substantive state. But, according to James, "the Object of your thought is really

its entire content or deliverance, neither more nor less."<sup>50</sup> Strictly speaking, the object of thought is the fusion of the topic of any given stream with its fringes. In the case of our example, it is the entire sentence, "Columbus-discovered-America-in-1492." If we wish to treat the object here substantively, we must make a substantive out of it by writing hyphens between all of the words in the sentence. In this way, at least, we may capture something of the actual meaning of the object which otherwise would be lost were we only to attend to some portion of it.

Since the object of thought is a meaning, we can never take hold of it again unless the whole context in which it originally occurred is reproduced. And the probability of an identical situation or state of affairs taking place a second time is remote. Where such states of affairs can be reproduced, they are probably uninteresting. Even in memory we seldom accurately reproduce the total, original situation. We usually add something to it or take something away. Given, then, that the object of thought "is neither more nor less than all that the thought thinks, exactly as the thought thinks it, however complicated the matter, and however symbolic the manner of the thinking may be,"<sup>51</sup> it follows that the greatest part of the life of mind is lost forever as soon as objects pass beyond the moment of our present consciousness. As psychologists, it is our duty to stick as closely as possible to the thoughts we are studying. But

all that any psychologist can glean for study are the leftovers of some recent harvest of an abundant mental life.

In working out his view of the relationship between thought and its object, James rejects the atomism of earlier psychologies and anticipates (but does not develop fully) the views of recent phenomenologists. According to the earlier associationist-psychology, whenever the object of thought is complex, the thought of it must also be complex, i.e., contain as many ideas as there are elements in the object of thought. But James's point is that, "however complex the object may be, the thought of it is one undivided state of consciousness."<sup>52</sup> For example, take some object, like a pack of cards on a table. The thought "the pack of cards is on the table" cannot be reduced to so many ideas each corresponding to some card in the deck, or to the idea of the table, or the legs of the table, and so on. It is one thought with one object or meaning. Whenever we try to describe one of our thoughts, we usually concentrate on a particular aspect or portion of it and not the whole thought as it is fringed in experience. In effect, we pull out of the whole context some particular thing--e.g., the pack of cards--and describe it. But in describing, say, the pack of cards, we are now talking about something different from the original thought in which the pack was only one element. Yet, for the most part, when we describe the pack of cards, we believe that we are describing the whole thought. We do this for the reason that we become habituated to the practice

of attending to, and talking about, topics and not total objects. In our example, the thought is not "a pack of cards." It is an altogether different thing, namely, "the-pack-of-cards-is-on-the-table." Here we are presented with one undivided state of consciousness the object of which (its meaning) implies not only the pack of cards, but every one of the cards in it, the table--its color, size, parts, and so on--, as well as the relation "being on." The state of consciousness implied by the hyphenated sentence bears very little resemblance to the thought "the pack of cards" alone. Consequently, as James has said, "What a thought is, and what it may be developed into, or explained to stand for, and be equivalent to, are two things, not one."<sup>53</sup>

In effect, we can never capture the fullness of the fringed thought and talk about it. For, like some will-o'-the-wisp, it immediately eludes us. In talking about some object, we focus upon its substantive parts and conceptualize about them as though they were the total object. Hence, for the conceiving state of mind, the world of meanings stands above the things meant in a kind of changeless, platonic Realm of Ideas. On the other hand, feelingly speaking, the things meant continue to exist in the experiential world of real time and space.

The function by which we identify a numerically distinct and permanent subject of discourse is called conception. The word conception properly denotes neither the conceiving state of mind nor the object of conception, but the relation

between them, namely, "the function of the mental state in signifying just that particular thing."<sup>54</sup> Whenever we can sufficiently identify any thing, event, or quality as a this or that, we have, at least in some minimal sense, a conception of it. Accordingly, "A polyp would be a conceptual thinker if a feeling of 'Hollo! thingumbob again!' ever flitted through its mind."<sup>55</sup> Briefly, then, conception begins with the initial insight that we are experiencing the same thing again.

When the conceptualizing state of mind brings into focus some segment of the flowing mass of neutral stuff and attends to it steadfastly, without confusion, conception results. Hence, in conception, objects have being. That is, objects come into being whenever minding and mattering<sup>56</sup> are so related that discrete things emerge from the flux and stand in their own right before the consciousness, independently, as things to be reckoned with.

A problem is bound to arise due to James's use of the word "object." We can distinguish at least three different meanings: (1) First, and this is the Common-sense view, "object" refers to some discrete, concrete particular in physical reality--e.g., that tree or that man--which exists, or is held to exist objectively or independently of its being known. (2) "Object" refers to the "topic" of a stream of thought plus its fringed relations. Hence, in this sense, it corresponds to some total state of consciousness, in which case then it is subjective. (3) "Object" refers to the

meaning which emerges from (2). In this sense--the most important one from the point of view of James's radical empiricism--objects (meanings) emerge in conception, which is a relation between (a) the conceiving state of mind, and (b) the neutral stuff or "pure experience." Hence, under this interpretation, the distinction between the world-out-there and the world-in-experience vanishes. For the objective and subjective worlds merge into a new, third world, which is, if I may, a "conceptive" one. Here we must be careful not to reduce the subject to (1), or some modification of it, nor should we reduce (1) to the experiencing self or subject. Both come together in the World of Meaning. Reality is, consequently, a plenum of meanings.

The fifth characteristic of the stream of consciousness to which James draws attention has to do with the choosing activity of thought, or "selective attention." In James's terms, consciousness "is always interested more in one part of its object than in another, and welcomes and rejects, or chooses, all the while it thinks."<sup>57</sup> We are seldom aware how incessantly our consciousness works in ways not ordinarily called choosing or selecting. For example, the monotonous, steady tick of a clock, or the beat of a drum, is broken up into rhythmic patterns by accenting the beat differently. A dot-filled surface is organized in rows or groups. Line segments are formed into discrete figures. And so on. However, we do more than just organize elements into meaningful shapes or patterns by uniting some and

keeping others apart. According to James, "We actually ignore most of the things before us."<sup>58</sup> From the swarming continuum, devoid of shape and meaning, we emphasize aspects of it by attending to but a minute fraction of the elements that at any given moment impress themselves upon us. Such selective attention is already apparent at the level of the senses themselves.

According to James, the senses are but organs of selection which pick out those movements, sounds, colors, shapes, and so on, which fall within the limits of possible experience. The eye cannot pick up all the wave lengths of light nor can the ear pick up all the sound waves. While physics teaches us that the outer world consists of more than meets the eye or ear, the senses respond to those "signals" only to which they are capable of responding and ignore the rest as though they do not exist at all. In short, the world of all possible sensations is already circumscribed for us by the physical limitations of our sensory organs. And given different "equipment," sentient organisms perceive different worlds.

As physical sensations are limited by the nature of the sense organs, what we experience in conscious awareness is determined by our habits of attention.<sup>59</sup> James, following Helmholtz, says that we notice only those sensations which are signs to us of things. But things are only special groups of sensible qualities to which, for practical or

aesthetic or other reasons, we happen to give substantive names and elevate to a position of independence and integrity.

On a somewhat higher level, what happens among the sensations we get from each separate thing? According to James, the mind selects again.

It chooses certain of the sensations to represent the thing most truly, and considers the rest as its appearances, modified by the conditions of the moment. Thus my table-top is named square, after but one of an infinite number of retinal sensations which it yields, the rest of them being sensations of two acute and two obtuse angles; but I call the latter perspective views, and the four right angles the true form of the table, and erect the attribute squareness into the table's essence, for aesthetic reasons of my own. In like manner, the real form of the circle is deemed to be the sensation it gives when the line of vision is perpendicular to its center--all its other sensations are signs of this sensation. The real sound of the cannon is the sensation it makes when the ear is close by. The real color of the brick is the sensation it gives when the eye looks squarely at it from a near point, out of the sunshine and yet not in the gloom; under other circumstances it gives us other color-sensations which are but signs of this--we then see it looks pinker or blacker than it really is. The reader knows no object which he does not represent to himself by preference as in some characteristic distance, of some standard tint, etc., etc. But all these essential characteristics, which together form for us the genuine objectivity of the thing and are contrasted with what we call the subjective sensations it may yield us at a given moment, are mere sensations like the latter. The mind chooses to suit itself, and decided what particular sensation shall be held more real and valid than all the rest.<sup>60</sup>

Even on the level of reasoning, the phenomenon of selective attention is found to be omnipotent.<sup>61</sup> For, as James says, "all Reasoning depends on the ability of the

mind to break up the totality of the phenomenon reasoned about, into parts, and to pick out from among these the particular one which, in our given emergency, may lead to the proper conclusion. Another predicament will need another conclusion, and require another element to be picked out."<sup>62</sup> By this criterion, the man of genius is the one who always manages to pick out the right element at the right time. If the "emergency" be theoretical, it is the ability to pick out the right reason. If it involves a practical situation, it is the ability to pick out the right means.

At every stage the mind is presented with a multiplicity of sensations and experiences which indicate different possible futures and meanings. In consciousness we compare these with each other, selecting some and suppressing the rest. At every state of awareness or cognition, the higher and more elaborate "mental products" are chosen from the data selected by the next lower stage or, as James says, faculty. And the products of that stage, by the one below it, which were sifted from an even larger amount of simpler elements. Whereas we see insects by the thousands but fail to take notice of anything important or distinctive about them, the entomologist on the other hand may be wild with excitement in seeing for the first time a particular kind of beetle which hitherto he had only been aware of by description. Or again, let several men take a trip to Europe. Each will bring back different impressions according to his interests. One will talk about architecture, another

restaurants. A third, Europe's natural beauty. A fourth, little or nothing at all since, perhaps, he was caught up in his own private world of brooding and misery. In the practice of painting we have an even better example. The artist continually selects his objects, shapes, colors, tones, and rejects everything which does not harmonize with his purpose or conception. According to James, that unity and harmony which gives a work of art its superiority over nature, is wholly due to selective attention or elimination.<sup>63</sup>

The mind, in short, works on the data it receives very much as a sculptor works on his block of stone. In a sense the statue stood there from eternity. But there were a thousand different ones beside it, and the sculptor alone is to thank for having extricated this one from the rest. Just so the world of each of us, howsoever different our several views of it may be, all lay embedded in the primordial chaos of sensations, which gave the mere matter to the thought of all of us indifferently. We may, if we like, by our reasonings unwind things back to that black and jointless continuity of space and moving clouds of swarming storms which science calls the only real world. But all the while the world we feel and live in will be that which our ancestors and we, by slowly cumulative strokes of choice, have extricated out of this, like sculptors, by simply rejecting certain portions of the given stuff. Other sculptors, other statues from the same stone! Other minds, other worlds from the same monotonous and inexpressive chaos! My world is but one in a million alike embedded, alike real to those who may abstract them. How different must be the worlds in the consciousness of ant, cuttlefish, or crab!<sup>64</sup>

The upshot of James's argument is that a thing may be present to us a thousand times, but if we persistently fail to notice it, it cannot be said to enter into any level of our experience. Similarly, because of individual differences, we may

take notice of things which to others have little or no importance or reality. The world of my own choosing is but one of an infinite number of possible worlds. But the world I fashion for myself is neither more nor less real than the world that someone else may fashion after his own design.

From the beginning, James thought of himself as an empiricist. As early as 1879,<sup>65</sup> he endeavored to defend his empiricism, not merely as a method, but as an epistemological and metaphysical theory as well. Subsequently, late in life, in order to distinguish his position from that of the British empiricists, who held to an associationistic and atomistic theory of mind, James christened his doctrine "Radical Empiricism."

To be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced. For such a philosophy, the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as "real" as anything else in the system.<sup>66</sup>

James proposed a return to "pure experience" as it is lived through in the immediate flux of life. Instead of assuming with Hume that discrete perceptions correspond to discrete things, and that any perception of connection between things was only fictional,<sup>67</sup> James maintained that experience is continuous and that the separation of experience into discrete parts was only secondary. He further maintained that we feel or perceive temporal and spatial relations just as we come to distinguish the separate "things" they relate.

If there be such things as feelings at all, then so surely as relations between objects exist in rerum natura, so surely, and more surely, do feelings exist to which these relations are known. There is not a conjunction or a preposition, and hardly an adverbial phrase, syntactic form, or inflection of voice, in human speech, that does not express some shading or other of relation which we at some moment actually feel to exist between the larger objects of our thought. If we speak objectively, it is the real relations that appear revealed; if we speak subjectively, it is the stream of consciousness that matches each of them by an inward coloring of its own. In either case the relations are numberless, and no existing language is capable of doing justice to all their shades.

We ought to say a feeling of and, a feeling of if, a feeling of but, and a feeling of by, quite as readily as we say a feeling of blue or a feeling of cold. Yet we do not: so inveterate has our habit become of recognizing the existence of the substantive parts alone, that language almost refuses to lend itself to any other use.<sup>68</sup>

The question, How do relations relate? finds a solution in James's new account of experience. Until James, philosophers were puzzled by this question because they confused perception with conception. Percepts are given in immediate experience, fringed in all their relations. But concepts are mental constructions which dissect experience into discrete parts. In perception we see pack-of-cards-is-on-the-table: conceptually, however, we may distinguish between "pack," "on," and "table" and talk about them as though they were the objects in mind. For James, perceptual experience is continuous. But for purposes of discourse or analysis, experience is atomized--i.e., made discrete--by an act of thought or conception. In conception, then, meanings emerge from the flux of experience and stand before the mind. As representatives of experience, or surrogates of reality, meanings

are endowed with the respectability of Thinghood. Meanings, if you will, are entertained by the mind as if they were Things-in-themselves, each being an Object<sup>69</sup> with sovereignty of its own. But, we continue to suspect, they only bear a mandate from some superior authority whose inscrutable nature shall forever remain a mystery.

Summary: Unlike traditional theories of mind, which begin with "simple sensations" and then proceed to construct higher mental states out of their association and integration, James places the experiencing Self in the midst of the flux of things in which the fullness of conscious life is taken as the immediate datum for psychological inquiry. But since the knower is intimately connected with what is known, any description of the mental life, or stream of consciousness, necessarily entails an analysis of the world which appears to it.

In his analysis, James distinguishes five characteristics of the stream of thought. First, thoughts are essentially private. Whereas we are directly acquainted with our own thoughts and feelings, we can only know about mental states in others. Second, the stream of thought is in constant change. This is so for the reason that every state of consciousness corresponds to some physical change in the brain. Consequently, a given state of consciousness can never recur and be identical with what it was before. For even at the simplest level, where we meet, so to speak, the same object

a second time, we recognize it as the same object we met before. However, our second meeting is conditioned by the experience of the first. And given a favorable or unfavorable acquaintance initially, we greet it with joy or regret or indifference a second time. But not only is the experience modified by virtue of some physical change in our neurological make-up, the situation in which we greet an object a second time, while perhaps similar, is never the same.

Third, whereas the stream of consciousness is sensibly continuous, we nevertheless discriminate between its "transitive" and "substantive" states. Transitive states correspond to feelings and so are subjective. Substantive states correspond to thoughts and so are objective. In effect, we have knowledge of things in feeling, but we know about them in thought. But thoughts and feelings are only different states of the same stream or ways of describing the manifold of experience. In thought we endeavor to take hold of the stream of felt relations and contemplate them for a time before they change or fade away. However, we can never capture the fullness of the experience in thought as it is actually lived-through in feeling. Because of the elusive nature of feelings and the poverty of language in terms whereby we may express them, feelings of relation and other unnamed states have been largely ignored by traditional philosophies of mind. Rather, they have tended to concentrate mainly upon the substantive states of consciousness.

Hence, the very nature of reality as we tend to conceive it conventionally has been defined in terms which largely ignore the realities of subjective experience: realities which are felt in a halo of fringes but which when conceptualized stand before the mind in bare outline and utmost simplicity. Whereas the "topic" is the focal point or meaning of the stream from the conceptual point of view, the total "Object" of thought includes all the fringed relations that are directly given in experience and which are felt to be part of the stream.

There are numerous problems that are associated with James's treatment of the relationship between thought and its object, which may in part account for the omission of the fourth characteristic from the list of characteristics in the Briefer Course and the Talks to Teachers. According to James, human thought appears to deal with objects independent of itself: that is, consciousness possesses the function of knowing. The substance of his discussion is this: We ordinarily tend to think of the object of thought as a discrete thing without reference to our knowledge of it. From a common-sense point of view, we tend to believe that objects exist out there, so to speak, just the way we perceive them. While James postulates the existence of external objects, we can only know them in terms of our own experience. To ask what an object is in itself apart from any knowledge of it is to pose a meaningless question. Since objects-out-there are what we experience them to be,

they are, then, what they mean to us. In conceptual experience meanings emerge and stand before the mind as objects of thought. In short, meanings represent the external world to the mind. Consequently, the distinction between objective and subjective realities vanishes in light of a new account of reality which is conceptive.

Finally, the fifth aspect of consciousness is that it exhibits purposiveness and choice. Whereas the mark of intelligence in any creature is that it behaves purposively, the main import of James's discussion of the criteria of mentality in a phenomenon lies in the ability to make choices. In brief, James's concept of consciousness also entails a commitment to freedom and purposive action.

## CHAPTER III

### BELIEF AND ACTION

The function of the conceiving state of mind is to focus upon an object and grasp its meaning. According to James, belief is "the mental state or function of cognizing /conceiving/ reality."<sup>1</sup> It is one's assent to the truth of a statement about a given state-of-affairs which is taken to be real.<sup>2</sup> Belief, or the sense of reality, is a kind of yea-feeling or emotion in which we willingly consent to the truth of a proposition or are inclined to act in a certain way toward the state-of-affairs so cognized. The activity of thought, then, comes to an end when conception seizes upon a belief which is inwardly stable, clear, and distinct. In such a state, when the mind is free from doubt and conflict, the body is prepared or set to act toward the object of belief in a manner appropriate to the state-of-affairs in question. Hence, cognitively speaking, the state of belief is characterized by repose or inactivity: however, "practically"<sup>3</sup> speaking, it is characterized by a disposition to act toward the object of belief. One need not act in every case: it is sufficient only that we be prepared to act should it happen to be the case that a given belief were put to a test or came into question.

For James, the true opposite of belief is not the state of disbelief: it is doubt--or, what amounts to the same thing, inquiry.<sup>4</sup> Whenever a state-of-affairs is inadequately cognized, we continue to inquire into its conditions and reality until such time as we no longer feel any doubt about its meaning. The extent to which we may pursue any question is governed by our interest in it. But no question can be settled absolutely, unless we close our mind to it. The point at which each of us closes his mind to a given question is probably different. If for no other reason, we are interested in different things.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, our interests not only govern what we take to be true, they govern what we take to be real. As our interests change, so will our beliefs regarding truth and reality change. As children, we may believe that Santa Claus is real. And, to the extent that our belief is not frustrated. Santa Claus is real. However, with the passing years, the consequences of believing in Santa no longer seem to support our belief. And, sooner or later, while we can still imagine him to exist, we no longer believe that he is real.<sup>6</sup>

We all know the difference between imagining a thing to exist and believing it to be real. In the case of belief, the mind not only grasps some definite object, but it holds that object to have real existence independent of our idea of it. Beliefs always involve objects that we take to be real. They never involve objects we take to be only imaginary. However, the question boils down to this: By what criteria

do we decide between what is real and what is only imaginary by way of belief?

James asks us to consider the following case:

Suppose a new-born mind, entirely blank and waiting for experience to begin. Suppose that it begins in the form of a visual impression . . . of a lighted candle against a dark background, and nothing else, so that whilst this image lasts it constitutes the entire universe known to the mind in question. Suppose, moreover . . . that the candle is only imaginary, and that no 'original' of it is recognized by us psychologists outside. Will this hallucinatory candle be believed in, will it have a real existence for the mind?

What possible sense (for that mind) would a suspicion have that the candle was not real? What would doubt or disbelief of it imply? When we, the onlooking psychologists, say the candle is unreal, we mean something quite definite, viz., that there is a world known to us which is real, and to which we perceive that the candle does not belong; it belongs exclusively to that individual mind, has no status anywhere else, etc. It exists, to be sure, in a fashion, for it forms the content of that mind's hallucination; but the hallucination itself, though unquestionably it is a sort of existing fact, has no knowledge of other facts; and since these other facts are the realities par excellence for us, and the only things we believe in, the candle is simply outside of our reality and belief altogether.

By the hypothesis, however, the mind which sees the candle can spin no such considerations as these about it, for of other facts, actual or possible, it has no inkling whatever. That candle is its all, its absolute. Its entire faculty of attention is absorbed by it. It is, it is that; it is there; no other possible candle, or quality of this candle, no other possible place, or possible object in the place, no alternative, in short, suggests itself as even conceivable; so how can the mind help believing the candle real? The supposition that it might possibly not do so is, under the supposed conditions, unintelligible.<sup>7</sup>

In short, unless we have other ideas which contradict our belief in the reality of some object, we will ipso facto believe it to be real. In the case of the illustration above, we would posit the candle as the sole, absolute reality.<sup>8</sup> This point was also recognized by Spinoza long ago. According to him, "opinion" or "imagination" is alone the cause of falsity.<sup>9</sup> But falsity consists only in inadequate knowledge which confused ideas involve.<sup>10</sup> In so far as I perceive Pegasus (a winged horse), without relation to anything else, Pegasus exists.<sup>11</sup> For what else can it be "to perceive a winged horse than to affirm of the horse that is has wings?"<sup>12</sup> But, on the other hand, if the idea of Pegasus is joined with another idea which negates its existence, or is an inadequate idea of a winged horse, then, according to Spinoza, the mind must necessarily deny its existence. Briefly, then, so long as we can see no impossibility or contradiction, we may continue to hypostasize the existence of things. However, if our hypostatizations are based upon false opinion, which inadequate ideas involve, we are inevitably led into contradictions.

The whole distinction between what is real and what is only imaginary has to do with two basic facts: (1) on several occasions I may think of a given thing differently; and (2) when I compare my ideas about it, I may choose which one I will believe.<sup>13</sup> If I imagine only a horse with wings, that image is not contradicted by anything else. In that situation, my winged horse and the place in which it appears

are equally real. However, if I were to carry my idea of a winged horse into the context of a world in which I know that horses do not have wings, then my Pegasus would be revealed to me for what it is, namely, a figment of my imagination--albeit, perhaps, still a cherished companion in imaginative flights into dreamland, or mythology.

For most of us--perhaps all of us at one time or another--, some "dream-object"<sup>14</sup> may take hold with such tenacity that it is virtually impossible for us to believe that it is not real. Even where we are otherwise convinced, we continue to half-suspect that it is after all quite real, even though nobody else seems to think so. To conjecture what these dream-objects are in each case would probably challenge the powers of the most inventive minds. But one thing at least is clear. In the light of new experiences, we can see that the dreams of Icarus cannot begin to compare to the realities of Apollo 11.

The border-line between imagination and reality cannot be drawn sharply. Our conceptions of reality vary too greatly and change too rapidly. In choosing which way to think about objects, we tend to adhere to those beliefs which further our interests or enable us to predict the outcome of future states-of-affairs or which form more coherent patterns in thought. Those things which are most consistent with the above ends, we tend to accept as being real. Those things which do not further such ends, we take to be only imaginary. In so far as there are no ideas which contradict, say, our

belief in an almighty and benevolent God, then the goodness and power of God cannot be questioned. But to the extent that we perceive imperfection and evil in our world, then we may not only doubt God's benevolence and power, we may come to deny his existence as well.

According to James, "The total world of which the philosophers must take account is thus composed of realities plus the fancies and illusions."<sup>15</sup> Although imaginary objects do not have the same existence as real things, they still have some existence. If they did not, we could not even entertain them in the imagination. "As objects of fancy, as errors, as occupants of dreamland, etc., they are in their way as indefeasible parts of life, as undeniable features of the Universe, as the realities are in their way."<sup>16</sup> My winged horse occupies every bit as much the same mental space as real horses do. The fact that we find no winged horses in concrete experience only points to the fact that there aren't any: not to the fact that there can't be winged horses. The idea of a winged horse involves no logical impossibility. If it did, I could not have such an idea since, by definition, it would be impossible.<sup>17</sup> But objects of imagination are not impossible objects for experience. It may be the case that some such objects will forever remain only in the world of imagination. But it is not necessarily the case that they all will. For in some cases, what we only first conceive in imagination, we can later bring into real existence. If this was not so, then it would seem that we would have to deny

all those products of thought which have given rise to civilization and modern life, which include monstrous engines of war as well as works of art and our own children, at least where they were first conceived in thought. To deny such things is obviously absurd.

The two-fold division of ideas into those which stand for realities and those which do not, seems to be the simplest way of classifying our conceptions. However, James says, "there are more than two sub-universes of which we take account . . . For there are various categories both of illusion and of reality. . . ." <sup>18</sup> According to James, most of us recognize and discriminate from each other at least seven sub-universes, or "worlds," which include the following:

- (1) The world of sense or physical reality.
- (2) The world of (natural) science.
- (3) The world of ideal relations and abstract concepts.
- (4) The world of "idols of the tribe," or group prejudices.
- (5) The world of supernaturalism: religion, mythology, or fable.
- (6) The world of individual opinion.
- (7) The world of sheer madness and vagary. <sup>19</sup>

Our tendency is to think of these various worlds disconnectedly; and when we are dealing with one of them, we more or less lose sight of the others. However, if we were to be objective we would endeavor to assign to each object of our thought its proper place in one of the worlds as well as see the relation of each world to the others. <sup>20</sup>

Every object of thought, according to James, can at last be placed in one of the worlds listed above. But where a given object is to be placed is a matter of no little dispute in some cases. Since we are all disposed toward things differently, there is no one natural order to things upon which we can all agree. If we were disinterested in things, we would probably have much less difficulty in agreeing on where we should place them. About the most that we can presently conclude is that each world is real after its fashion and exists so long as we are cognizant of it. But with the lapse of interest or attention, a world may collapse and sink into nothingness.<sup>21</sup>

Each of us has certain predominant habits of attention. Such habits are ways of looking at things, or sets, which dispose us toward one world or another. The world toward which we are so disposed then becomes for us pre-eminently real. In terms of this world, we then pronounce judgment upon all conceptions and find them to be real or not real. Real conceptions are the beliefs we hold and are prepared to act upon. Those which we find not real, we entertain with varying degrees of sympathy and tolerance, from benignity, amusement, dislike, to outright hostility and condemnation. From the point of view of (2), the world of science, so long as my winged horse does not pretend to be a real horse, it may fly in (5), the world of mythology, to its heart's content. But if from (6), individual opinion, I claim that

Pegasus is real, then those in the world of natural science may wish to place me in (7), the world of sheer madness.<sup>22</sup>

As we shall soon see, most men hold that things of sense are the rock-bottom reals. Hence the world of physical reality becomes the "absolutely real world's nucleus,"<sup>23</sup> from which we ultimately judge all things. And given similar physiological equipment, we are bound to judge things of sense, 1's, similarly. At this level, at least, there is considerable agreement. But other things are real to the extent that we are interested and attend to them. For some, things of science, 2's, are more real than 5's, supernatural entities. For others, like extreme Platonists, the world of 3's, ideal forms, constitute the whole of reality, everything else being illusion. But even for the Platonist, he must admit that he cannot escape the reals of sense experience irrespective of what he chooses to call them. We feel a pain just as surely whether we call it real or only imaginary. To say we are in pain but cannot feel it would be meaningless. From a larger view, it is but sheer dogmatism to say that only so-and-so's are real. For in the strict and ultimate sense of "existence," everything which can be thought, can be thought to exist as an object in some world.<sup>24</sup> And from the existence of an object, we can infer the existence of some interested intelligence whose object it is.<sup>25</sup>

The mere fact that an object appears before my mind is not, however, a sufficient reason for me to take it to be real. It may be a reality for someone else: or it may be

a reality for no one. It may be only imaginary. What it takes for an object to be real requires something more. Beyond its mere appearance before some mind, the object must also be interesting and important to the individual who apprehends it.<sup>26</sup> Objects which are neither interesting nor important we tend to disregard. To the extent that objects fade from consciousness, they disappear into oblivion and unreality.

In the relative sense, then, the sense in which we contrast reality with simple unreality, and in which one thing is said to have more reality than another, and to be more believed, reality means simply relation to our emotional and active life. This is the only sense which the word ever has in the mouths of practical men. In this sense, whatever excites and stimulates our interest is real; whenever an object so appeals to us that we turn to it, accept it, fill our mind with it, or practically take account of it, so far it is real for us, and we believe it. Whenever, on the contrary, we ignore it, fail to consider it or act upon it, despise it, reject it, forget it, so far it is unreal for us and disbelieved.<sup>27</sup>

When Hume said that belief was nothing but "a more vivid, lively, forcible, firm, steady conception of an object than the imagination alone is ever able to attain,"<sup>28</sup> he seems to have been expressing a similar idea.

The consciousness of Self, then, is the hook upon which the chain of living realities dangles. Those objects which have an immediate sting, or which "grab" us,<sup>29</sup> form the first links in the chain. Next, those objects most continuously related to the first. And so on. Only when an object fails to sting us does it cease to be part of our chain of beliefs.

For "Whatever things have intimate and continuous connection with my life are things of whose reality I cannot doubt."<sup>30</sup>

Where things do not sting the Self and stick to it, it is hard to believe that they are quite real. In states of extreme depression, we may lose our sense of reality altogether.

Clearly, James defines reality in terms that are relevant to the individual. For if something does not mean anything to me--i.e., isn't "gutsy"--, I cannot seriously believe it or take it to be quite real. A great problem in education today has to do with the question of relevance. With greater and greater emphasis upon scientific and theoretical matters, less and less personal contact between students and teachers, new learning techniques which "program" students or stanchion them, like cattle, before "teaching machines," increased social and family pressures to get ahead or keep out of the draft, and so on, the current student rebellion against the "Establishment" is not too surprising. To the extent that we pursue knowledge in a purely "objective," scientific way, we may find ourselves losing sight of the several other worlds which must be taken into account if we are to recognize and fully appreciate what James called the "absolutely real reality," or total world.

The forms of reaction today are numerous. But perhaps the most significant form of reaction is the emphasis now being placed upon the subjective life, its inner states or feelings. The liberal use of drugs may be an over-reaction

to the previous limitations placed upon mind-explorations. Perhaps it is a desperate measure. In any case, this inward turning upon the subjective life as it is lived through in experience may indicate a genuine need to get back to the real thing--the individual person and what he finds important and interesting.<sup>31</sup>

For the infant, the world is one primal chaos. In the earliest stages of life, he cannot even differentiate it from himself. The first sign of Selfhood, so to speak, appears when the child can make some rough, yet fairly determinate "judgment" between himself and his world: between his immediate feeling of thisness or "Self," and his feeling of thatness or "not-Self." In the beginning, then, Two Things: this and that--two "sciousness"--mutually related in consciousness.

From the moment of first awareness, we continue to differentiate aspects of the primal stuff, beginning with the immediate data of sense experience. Initially, we may only differentiate between the pleasure- or pain-giving qualities of things. Then sensations of warmth and cold, light and dark, hard and soft, sweet and sour, and so on. Throughout life we continue to make finer and sharper distinctions between things of sense, such that, for example, an expert can distinguish between a given Burgundy from neighboring vineyards, or between vintages of the same grape. But all these things are of immediate sense experiences only. They are in no way abstract or "ideal." The bulk of later

learning in formal institutions deals with abstract problems and the development of conceptual tools for their solution. And as we move up the ladder of abstraction, we may even ascend to heights from which the reality of things in concreto may no longer be perceived. Where this is the case, objects of abstract thought may enjoy perhaps only a most precarious existence, like renegades from the world of imagination which may belie their author's sense of reality.

The above account is admittedly over-simplified. Nevertheless, the main point is that in sensation experience begins, and to sensation experience shall return. For sensible objects are either (a) our realities, or (b) the test of our realities.<sup>32</sup> And unless conceptual objects have sensible effects, we cannot believe that they stand for anything practically real. If, for example, we wish to decide whether X represents some reality, then we should connect X's claim to legitimacy with its "parent" facts of sensation. Where such facts can be discovered and we can connect X with them, then we may acknowledge X to be a legitimate concept. However, where such facts cannot be discovered, then X is forced to remain a bastardly notion, at least until such time as it can make practical connections.

While sensations are the test of practical realities, there is a priority among them which seems to correspond to the traditional classification between primary and secondary qualities. Secondary qualities vary from individual to individual as well as from moment to moment. The particular

sensation of color that I am enjoying varies as the day grows brighter. In the dark, I cannot see it at all. The size of an object which I see in the distance looks small as compared to its size when I am at close range. The fragrance of a rose disappears when I am too far removed from the rose itself or when its particular fragrance blends with the fragrances of other flowers in the garden. The whistle seems to vary in pitch as the train approaches and then passes me by. The stick looks bent when half-submerged in the water, and so on and on. However, while secondary qualities are immediately perceived, I cannot always count on being able to perceive them in the same way, nor can I be certain that the stick which I see is not bent. Visually I see a bent stick. But if I am in doubt about it, I need only go to where I see the stick, take it up, and run my hand over it. If my hand "tells" me that it is straight, then the stick is straight. If I still remain in doubt about the matter, then, unfortunately, I must remain in doubt, for I am without recourse. Perhaps I say, "Oh, but I'll ask Tom." But all that Tom can do is to look to see whether it is bent. If he is in doubt, he can run his hand over the stick too, thereby confirming or disconfirming my belief. Where we both believe that the stick is straight, then there are at least two reasons for believing that it is straight. Should we disagree, we may call on Harry. But all that Harry can do is. . . . And so on. Beyond the sense of touch, there is no higher court of appeals for practical claims. To insist upon

some further test, is to go beyond the limits of human sensibility. And to persist in such a query is simply unreasonable.

As James pointed out, "It is ~~an~~ tangibles, then, that things concern us most; and the other senses, so far as their practical use goes, do but warn us of what tangible things to expect."<sup>33</sup> In a similar way Berkeley also argued that the other senses are but organs which anticipate tactile or muscular sensations.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, for both Berkeley and James,<sup>35</sup> the statement "Tom, I see water on the road about half-mile ahead" can be interpreted to mean that, at 60 m.p.h., both Tom and I should expect to be able to get out of the car in approximately 30 seconds, wet our hands, quench our thirst, soak our feet, or otherwise do what we do when we believe that water is before us and that we have a disposition to use it. But if we can do none of these things, then we must be content to believe that there is no water immediately present and that I was mistaken when I said that there was. To be sure, I saw something--i.e., I had certain visual sensations--, but what I saw was not in fact water. Perhaps it was only a mirage: a stream of hot air across which distant objects were reflected, much like objects are reflected in a pool, which I took to be real water.

If we drove no further, my claim that there is water ahead could not be challenged by Tom. However, should we continue to drive, we could expect to be able to test my claim and show it to be true or false. Ordinarily, in such

a situation, I would not be shaken to find out that I was wrong. That kind of mistake frequently happens. It is a commonplace error. But, other things considered, if the car were heating up, or I were in desperate need of water to drink, the truth or falsehood of the statement would then be of grave concern. For in believing that there is water ahead, I would act on that belief in a most interested, serious, and determined way. And, in a given situation, depending on what I believe and how I was prepared to act, I may even wager my life on a certain outcome or set of consequential facts.

My belief that there is water ahead is made true when subsequent experiences are realized and which experiences correspond to the belief in question. Where I am practically concerned, the truth of a belief is of great interest. It is also important, for the consequences of believing it to be true, when it may be really false, could be disastrous. On the other hand, where neither Tom nor I have any immediate felt needs and the car is operating satisfactorily, the question of there being water ahead may not even arise, or, if it did, we probably would not give it a second thought. In the next 30 seconds we would drive on, unaware and unconcerned whether my passing remark was true or not.

In brief, the same state-of-affairs excites us differently at different times and under different conditions. When I am thirsty and tired, I want to know if I can soon expect some relief. Consequently, I become interested when

someone remarks that he sees a place ahead. As a young child, I may have recited the Lord's Prayer ten-thousand times without ever believing that God exists. But now, alone, afraid, in urgent need of help, I cry out, "My God, hear me!"--as though someone were ready at hand to assist me if only he could hear my call. At that moment, I act upon a belief that something or someone is out there, so to speak, who can help. And so I wait; then call again. And again. When nothing happens, I give up hope. I fall into despair. I do nothing. I cannot act, for I believe nothing. And so I linger and suffer to live until reality escapes me altogether.

As James has said, "The quality of arousing emotion, of shaking, moving us or inciting us to action, has as much to do with our belief in an object's reality as the quality of giving pleasure or pain. . . . Speaking generally, the more a conceived object excites us, the more reality it has. . . ."36 Take, for example, the fear of snakes. Our fear may be so great that we may actually believe we see snakes there, there, and everywhere. We may be so set in our belief that we are not only prepared to jump away from real snakes, but we actually take all sorts of other things to be snakes and find ourselves jumping away from them. Or, for example, take the thought of falling from the edge of a precipice. Now if I were absolutely convinced that I would not be killed or injured, I should not have to hesitate one instant before I jumped from the precipice. The idea of jumping or falling could concern me less. For what could be of concern if I

were absolutely certain that I would not die or be hurt in any way. What makes the idea of falling or jumping emotionally exciting, is my firm belief that I am very much a man and that such an act could very quickly put an end to all of my concerns. I am fully persuaded that only a fool or a madman could jump without hesitation or a moment's pause. But where we are neither stupid nor mad, but nevertheless decide to jump, that decision is of absolutely utmost concern. For then we fully believe that we will die, and in full awareness of that fact and its consequences, deliberately go ahead and commit self-slaughter.

When James wrote "I take it that no man is educated who has never dallied with the thought of suicide,"<sup>37</sup> he seems to be saying that no man is educated who has never pondered the question whether life is worth living. Unlike the fool who knows no better, or the madman who thinks he is God, the normal, intelligent human being has a solid grasp on the meaning of human mortality. Even so, there are moments when he is likely to ponder the question of the value of life and come to a decision that it is not worth living. This is especially so when he believes that he has failed either to achieve his "ideal" goals, or when he believes he has failed to succeed in his pursuits relative to others with whom he sees himself in competition. Needless to say, when one does not compete or has no ends in mind, one cannot fail; but neither can he succeed. This is so for the reason, simply, that he hasn't attempted anything. The fool or madman

cannot succeed in suicide. They can only have fatal accidents. Only a thoughtful human being can take his own life deliberately. The reason why most men who contemplate suicide never manage to kill themselves probably has little to do with the notion that it is sinful. It has to do, rather, with the structure of belief-systems. The belief in life is stronger than the belief in death. That seems to be in the very nature of things. And so long as we can believe something and have hope for a better future, we can endure almost anything, even ourselves. The decision not to jump, then, is a form of action just as much as the decision to jump. It is even a "higher" form of decision. For to suspend action in the presence of an emotionally tense situation is the greatest power we possess as intelligent beings. And such power "is the highest result of education."<sup>38</sup>

In moments of great passion, the "natural man" acts without restraint.<sup>39</sup> Deep-down feelings bring him to act in ways he could not perhaps have foreseen, but once there cannot help acting upon again. In those moments, feelings move him to act without benefit of thought or due process of deliberation. His feelings are characterized by an emotion of strongest conviction. As Walter Bagehot wrote:

The Caliph Omar burnt the Alexandrian Library, saying: 'All books which contain what is not in the Koran are dangerous. All which contain what is in it are useless!' Probably no one ever had an intenser belief in anything than Omar had in this. Yet it is impossible to imagine it preceded by an argument. His belief in Mahomet, in the Koran, and in the sufficiency

of the Koran, probably came to him in spontaneous rushes of emotion; there may have been little vestiges of argument floating here and there, but they did not justify the strength of the emotion, still less did they create it, and they hardly even excused it. . . . Probably, when the subject is thoroughly examined, conviction will be found to be one of the intensest of human emotions, and one most closely connected with the bodily state. . . . Men in these intense states of mind have altered all history, changed for better or worse the creed of myriads, and desolated or redeemed provinces or ages. Nor is this intensity a sign of truth, for it is precisely strongest in those points in which men differ most from each other. John Knox felt it in his anti-Catholicism; Ignatius Loyola in his anti-Protestantism; and both, I suppose, felt it as much as it is possible to feel it.<sup>40</sup>

And according to James, all our deepest religious beliefs are of this kind: "The surest warrant for immortality is the yearning of our bowels for our dear ones; for God, the sinking sense it gives us to imagine no such Providence or help."<sup>41</sup> Such feelings, however, are not limited to the class of religious experiences. For example, we may express profound conviction toward political and social matters, or emotions of hatred or love toward others. The man-on-the-street is always ready to give you a piece of his mind. He may even express beliefs before he has thought about them. That is, in asking him what he thinks about a particular matter, we may actually afford him the occasion to discover for himself what he already believes but which, until the moment of our asking, he only felt in some deep, moving way.<sup>42</sup>

To believe a thing for no other reason than that we feel it passionately is to characterize the mystics revelatory

experience of God, the madman's jump from a precipice, or the mobs frenzied impulse to lynch someone, no matter who it is, provided only that there is a hanging. In moments of overwhelming conviction, with singleness of mind and purpose, we enter into battle or flee from a foe, hail a conquering hero or stone a prophet, cry for mercy or bait a Jew. In acts of deepest faith we commit others to flames or sing hallelujahs on the way to our own martyrdom. In short, the emotion of conviction may frequently be so great that motor impulses sweep assent along with it without the least resistance.

Let us now turn from the clearly psychological aspects of belief, to the more nearly logical ones which are found in James's account of meaning and truth.

In 1898, William James delivered a lecture before the Philosophical Union of the University of California entitled "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results."<sup>43</sup> The occasion of this address marks the beginning of the pragmatist "movement."<sup>44</sup> Pragmatism is often regarded as the only genuine philosophical movement native to America. In this lecture, James introduced the principle of pragmatism and made a special application of it to religion. Nine years later, in another lecture on pragmatism, he explicitly credited C. S. Peirce with first introducing the principle into philosophy.<sup>45</sup> The question of the "official" beginning of the pragmatist movement and who should be credited with its inception--James or Peirce--is, however, highly

problematic.<sup>46</sup> In any case, with the publication of James's Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (1907), and The Meaning of Truth: A Sequel to Pragmatism (1909), the general public came to recognize him as the champion of the new movement if not also its founder.

According to James, pragmatism is first a method, and then a genetic theory of what is meant by truth.<sup>47</sup> As a method, pragmatism is at its best when we are asked to consider the meaning of statements which are of a metaphysical kind. In order to understand the basic ideas behind pragmatism, it is instructive to quote a long passage from James's 1898 address in which he puts forth Peirce's "principle of practicalism--or pragmatism."<sup>48</sup>

Peirce's principle, as we may call it, may be expressed in a variety of ways, all of them very simple. In the Popular Science Monthly for January, 1878, he introduces it as follows: The soul and meaning of thought, he says, can never be made to direct itself towards anything but the production of belief, belief being the demi-cadence which closes a musical phrase in the symphony of our intellectual life. Thought in movement has thus for its only possible motive the attainment of thought at rest. But when our thought about an object has found its rest in belief, then our action on the subject can firmly and safely begin. Beliefs, in short, are really rules for action; and the whole function of thinking is but one step in the production of habits of action. If there were any part of a thought that made no difference in the thought's practical consequences, then that part would be no proper element of the thought's significance. Thus the same thought may be clad in different words; but if the different words suggest no different conduct, they are mere outer accretions, and have no part in the thought's meaning. If, however, they determine conduct differently, they are essential elements of the significance. . . . Thus to develop a thought's

meaning we need only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce; that conduct is for us its sole significance. And the tangible fact at the root of all our thought-distinctions, however subtle, is that there is no one of them so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice. To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, then, we need only consider what effects of a conceivably practical kind the object may involve--what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects, then, is for us the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all.

This is the principle of Peirce, the principle of pragmatism. I think myself that it should be expressed more broadly than Mr. Peirce expresses it. The ultimate test for us of what a truth means is indeed the conduct it dictates or inspires. But it inspires that conduct because it first foretells some particular turn to our experience which shall call for just that conduct from us. And I should prefer for our purposes this evening to express Peirce's principle by saying that the effective meaning of any philosophic proposition can always be brought down to some particular consequence, in our future practical experience, whether active or passive; the point lying rather in the fact that the experience must be particular, than in the fact that it must be active.

To take in the importance of this principle, one must get accustomed to applying it to concrete cases. Such use as I am able to make of it convinces me that to be mindful of it in philosophical disputations tends wonderfully to smooth out misunderstandings and to bring in peace. If it did nothing else, then, it would yield a sovereignly valuable rule of method for discussion. . . .

One of its first consequences is this. Suppose there are two different philosophical definitions, or propositions, or maxims, or what not, which seem to contradict each other, and about which men dispute. If, by supposing the truth of the one, you can foresee no conceivable practical consequence to anybody at any time or place, which is different from what you would foresee if you supposed the truth of the other, why then the difference between the two propositions is no difference,--it is only

a specious and verbal difference, unworthy of further contention. Both formulas mean radically the same thing, although they may say it in such different words. It is astonishing to see how many philosophical disputes collapse into insignificance the moment you subject them to this simple test. There can be no difference which doesn't make a difference--no difference in abstract truth which does not express itself in a difference of concrete fact, and of conduct consequent upon the fact, imposed on somebody, somehow, somewhere, and sometime. It is true that a certain shrinkage of values often seems to occur in our general formulas when we measure their meaning in this prosaic and practical way. They diminish. But the vastness that is merely based on vagueness is a false appearance of importance, and not a vastness worth retaining. The x's, y's, and z's always do shrivel, as I have heard a learned friend say, whenever at the end of your algebraic computations they change into so many plain a's, b's, and c's; but the whole function of algebra is, after all, to get them into that more definite shape; and the whole function of philosophy ought to be to find out what definite difference it will make to you and me, at definite instants of our life, if this world-formula or that world-formula be the one which is true.<sup>49</sup>

As a method, then, pragmatism is a way of deciding philosophical questions by appealing to future experience with reference to particular cases of a practical nature.<sup>50</sup> The pragmatist method tries to interpret every idea or notion by tracing its practical consequences. Given two different ideas, it simply asks what difference would it practically make to anyone if one, rather than the other, were true. Where no practical differences can be found, then they mean practically the same thing. Beyond this, it is idle to dispute further.<sup>51</sup> In looking toward consequences which are particular and concrete, the pragmatist places himself

solidly in the tradition of empiricism. As a new name for old ways of thinking, James claims there is nothing new in the pragmatist method. Socrates was an expert at it, and Aristotle used it methodically. Locke, Berkeley, and Hume were forerunners of pragmatism who made momentous contributions to truth by means of it.<sup>52</sup> With Peirce and James, pragmatism generalizes itself, becomes conscious of a universal applicability, and pretends to "a conquering destiny."<sup>53</sup>

Let us now turn to the second aspect of pragmatism mentioned earlier--the theory of truth.

The pivotal theme of James's Pragmatism is his account of truth, which is a relation between an idea and its object.<sup>54</sup> Where a given statement corresponds to a given state-of-affairs, it is true; where it does not, it is false. Here, James's notion of correspondence as agreement with reality is not, however, merely the old Lockian notion of correspondence in which there is, in effect, a one-to-one relation between an idea in the mind and some external object of which it is more or less an exact copy. As James says, "To copy a reality is, indeed, one very important way of agreeing with it, but it is far from being essential."<sup>55</sup> It soon becomes evident that James is speaking about a theory of behavior with reference to objects of belief. For correspondence or agreement with reality is a kind of working agreement with respect to ways of behaving in a given situation

where we believe that something is the case.<sup>56</sup> This is what

James said:

Where our ideas do not copy definitely their object, what does agreement with that object mean? . . . Pragmatism asks its usual question. "Grant an idea or belief to be true," it says, "What concrete difference will its being true make in any one's actual life? What experiences may be different from those which would obtain if the belief were false? How will the truth be realized? What, in short, is the truth's cash-value in experiential terms?" The moment pragmatism asks this question, it sees the answer: True ideas are those we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot. That is the practical difference it makes to us to have true ideas; that therefore is the meaning of truth, for it is all that truth is known as.

The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process, the process namely of its verifying itself, its verification. Its validity is the process of its validation.

To agree in the widest sense with a reality can only mean to be guided either straight up to it or into its surroundings, or to be put into such working touch with it as to handle either it or something connected with it better than if we disagreed. Better either intellectually or practically. . . . Any idea that helps us to deal, whether practically or intellectually, with either the reality or its belongings, that doesn't entangle our progress in frustration, that fits, in fact, and adapts our life to the reality's whole setting, will agree sufficiently to meet the requirements. It will be true of that reality.

The true, to put it very briefly, is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as the right is only the expedient in the way of our behaving. Expedient in almost any fashion, and expedient in the long run and on the whole, of course; for what meets expediently all the experiences in sight won't necessarily meet all farther experiences equally satisfactorily. Experience, as we know, has ways of boiling over, and making us correct our present formulas.<sup>57</sup>

James's metaphorical language in the above quotation has given rise to puzzlement and grave misunderstanding.<sup>58</sup> Let us endeavor to clarify this important passage and show how James is not nearly so subjectivistic as his critics are wont to believe.

For purposes of illustration, take the sentence "There is a desk in my study," which we may hereafter simply refer to as "S." First, we shall consider what S means from the pragmatist point of view, and then we shall endeavor to describe the conditions which must obtain in order to assert that S is true. According to James, the meaning of S has to do with the way I am disposed to act when I believe that there is an object in my study which corresponds to what we conventionally call a desk. The meaning of S, then, entails at least some of the following activities: I ought to be able to go up to a certain object in my study and sit at it, open its drawer and take out pen and paper, write upon it, paint it, have others look at it, or otherwise do what I have in mind doing when I believe that there is a desk in my study. The meaning of S leads me to expect to be able to do some or all of these things. And in believing that there is a desk in my study, I am consequently disposed to act in a certain way which is consistent with the way others would act were they to believe the same thing. However, neither I nor anyone else need do anything on a given occasion: it is sufficient only that we be prepared to act in a particular way should it happen to be the case that we were to do

something with reference to S or if the truth of S came into question.<sup>59</sup> In short, then, the meaning of S describes a set of behavioral responses which is quite different from the set I have adopted in another situation where, for example, I may believe that there is a fire in my study.

The truth of S follows upon my doing successfully the things I expect to do when I believe that there is a desk in my study. In short, S is made true when I put my belief to a "test," so to speak, and have it confirmed by subsequent experience. If I can do none of the things that I ordinarily expect to be able to do when I believe that there is a desk in my study, then I have every right to suspect that S is not true. For what else can the meaning of "true" be except that upon doing just those things I ordinarily do, I am led to discover what I expected to find in the first place.

If I were the only person to verify S, then the truth of S would indeed be a purely subjective matter. However, since the meaning of S prescribes a set of behaviors common to all who understand the meaning of S, we are in effect saying that what I do in a given case by way of testing the truth of S is the same kind of thing that someone else would do were he also to believe S and were he also concerned to test its truth. James's notion of truth as agreement with reality, like Peirce's, does not mean mere correspondence of a statement with some given state-of-affairs. Rather, it means corroboration with respect to certain ways of behaving among persons responding to the statement in that given situation,

or as James says, "in that reality."<sup>60</sup> In short, then, a true belief, would become a "rule of action" for everyone in a given situation who was prepared to act upon it.

From an empirical point of view, James is a thorough-going scientific philosopher. In order for any statement to be admitted into the body of scientific thought as a "fact," he argues that it must first be capable of being tested in experience. He contends that you cannot tell what the word "true" means, as applied to statements, without invoking the concept of the statement's working.<sup>61</sup> And such workings are tests whereby we confirm or disconfirm statements. The more tests which confirm a given statement, the "truer" it becomes. Where we are dealing with scientific generalizations such as, for example, "Sugar is soluble," all that we can claim by way of its truth is its "cash value" in terms of future experience or conduct. The "worth" of any statement is, therefore, determined by our confidence in its yielding the next time what it has yielded in the past. Where we are dealing with a novel situation, we cannot be very confident as to what we should expect since we have no experience in that particular matter. Consequently, we would weigh seriously the "odds" in that situation before action upon any belief concerning it.<sup>62</sup> Where we are dealing with a perfectly familiar situation--e.g., putting sugar in our coffee--the outcome of which has never failed to meet our expectations, we have every reason to believe that a statement expressive of that situation is true for at least that much, and almost

certainly true for much more in the future. While James's language is highly metaphorical, he is nevertheless expounding a view which is perfectly consistent with the language of inductive probability.

Every empirical statement can be construed hypothetically, i.e., as an "If . . . , then . . . " statement. For example, the statement "Sugar is soluble" can be construed in the following way: "If this is sugar, then it will dissolve when put in water." Or again, take the statement "X is harder than Y," which can be understood to mean that "If X is harder than Y, then I ought to be able to scratch Y with X but not vice versa." And so on. Every empirical statement can be turned into a hypothesis which indicates the kind of test to be performed and which, when performed successfully, constitutes a confirmation of it. In those cases where the hypothesis has been repeatedly confirmed over a period of a number of years by countless individuals without an instance of disconfirmation, we have no doubt about its truth. We act upon it without the least hesitation. Practically, then, where there is some believing tendency, there is a willingness to act. And where we have no doubt whatever, we are willing to act irrevocably.<sup>63</sup>

Unfortunately, we can never be absolutely certain about the truth of any empirical hypothesis. There is always some room for doubt. This follows for the reason that the world is in constant change and process: It is, as James might have put it, unfinished business. Consequently, there is

room for novelty and some chance that the unexpected will occur. In some cases, however, we are so accustomed to having our beliefs confirmed by frequent experiences that we perform them habitually, without concern for their truth. For example, I do not even think about the solubility of sugar when I use it as a sweetener in my coffee. For over a period of years, at least several times a day, I acted without the slightest concern on the belief that sugar dissolves and was never disappointed in my expectations. Today, as a result of my past experience, I am mentally at rest, confident in my conviction that all's right with the world so far as sugar is concerned and that it will dissolve when next I put it in my coffee. It's a reasonable thing for me to believe, even though it is not certain. Even where I am momentarily startled one day to find my mouth full of tiny, hard, tasteless particles of matter, I do not immediately jump to the conclusion that "Sugar is soluble" is false. On the contrary, I believe it to be true so strongly that I endeavor to search out an explanation for having my habit in this case frustrated. On the basis of another belief--viz., that my young son has been up to mischief--, I go up to him and, perhaps in a rage, spank him for putting play sand in the sugar bowl.

For James, meaning is bound to the notion of belief. Since beliefs are manifested in habits of action, the meaning of a particular belief is known by our action or our preparedness to act in a given way. As such, meanings do not

attach themselves to sentences or propositions, but to our habits of action. If the propositions p and q lead to the same habits of action, then they are not two different beliefs: they are the same belief. But if neither p nor q leads to any particular habits of action, then they are not beliefs at all. The meaning of a proposition, p, is the particular habit one has adopted.<sup>64</sup> The utterance of p is merely the verbal formulation which expresses it. This, it seems to me, is the heart of the pragmatist theory of meaning. While it is the case that beliefs vary in strength, it is, nevertheless, important to show that unless we are prepared to act in a given way, according to a rule of action (the action of which is a "test" and, hence, has observable consequences), we cannot be said to believe anything. That is, the meaning of a belief must be realized in an experiential situation in which its truth may be "experimentally" verified. Through experience and experimentation, a "true" belief tends towards greater and greater generality. Consequently, an absolutely true belief, if there were one, would become a rule of action for everyone in a given situation who believed it and who was prepared to act upon it. Beliefs, in short, are law-like in character. In the range of practical activity, they tend to become like Kant's imperatives.<sup>65</sup> In the range of scientific activity, they tend to become like natural or physical laws.

The above analysis endeavored to place James's theory of belief more securely in the tradition of empiricism and

science, where "tough-mindedness" means sticking to the facts of experience and living with whatever we happen to find. James was both tender-minded and tough-minded. His tough-mindedness has, however, been too long unrecognized or underestimated. He was an empiricist in the best scientific sense. He demanded evidence by way of concrete fact. Although James was the most tolerant of men and would entertain at least the possibility of something being true in spite of inadequate evidence, he learned from Chauncey Wright<sup>66</sup> the strict lessons of science and fully appreciated Wright's teaching that we are obligated to consider all the evidence as carefully as we can. Beyond that, we may then, and only then, believe what we will.

Unless we make an effort to get at the heart of James's theory of meaning and truth--and not be misled by his attractive, easy style--, we can only add to the ever-growing body of sentimental literature which interprets James's theories as merely a justification of his need for faith in God, freedom, and immortality; or, perhaps even worse, which interprets his concept of truth in the most idiosyncratic, subjective, and crass terms. While we cannot deny that religious matters play an important part in James's thought, the extent to which they have been written about exaggerates them to the point where we lose sight of the other problems he deemed important and upon which he expended such great effort and attention.

James was a many-faceted thinker and cannot be reduced to any one point of view or position. He lived a daring intellectual life. He could live with contingency, inconsistency, and even contradiction, if that's the way it had to be. About the only thing he was impatient of was system-building, where it meant selling-out the facts of experience for the sake of consistency. Whatever else James may have been guilty of (if he was guilty of any wrongdoing), he never let truth get away from the facts of experience.<sup>67</sup> In this regard, James's devoted friend and most ardent critic, Charles S. Peirce, has remarked: "After studying William James on the intellectual side for half a century--for I was not acquainted with him as a boy--I must testify that I believe him to be, and always to have been during my acquaintance with him, about as perfect a lover of truth as it is possible for a man to be. . . . In speaking, then, of William James as I do, I am saying the most that I could of any man's intellectual morality; and with him this was but one of a whole diadem of virtues."<sup>68</sup> The authority of Peirce,<sup>69</sup> today, ought to sober any critic who still interprets James's concept of truth and meaning crassly, as expressions of a market-place mentality or the sputtering of a near lunatic who communed with ghosts in some spirit world.

## CHAPTER IV

### EXPERIENCE AND ART

The greatest legacy William James bequeathed to posterity is his concept of experience. Not only is it fundamental to his evolutionary psychology; but it is central to his discussion of every facet of human conduct. While James illustrated the meaning of experience in his many works, he never explicitly discussed it in formal terms. Essential to the meaning of experience is the notion that experience has form. The very nature of learning implies having particular experiences. For without ever having an experience which is discrete and distinct from other experiences, it is doubtful that we could ever learn anything at all. What is at the heart of all this talk, then, is not experience as such, since that is too vague a term, but aesthetic experience. In speaking of aesthetic experience, we should not construe the term too narrowly. The word "aesthetic" usually pertains to that which is beautiful.<sup>1</sup> But we shall use the term more broadly, in which case other aspects of human activity may be considered to be aesthetic. Indeed, as we shall subsequently define it, aesthetic experience becomes the most fundamental category in terms of which we are to

understand and evaluate the products of human thought, feeling, and action.

While James never wrote a treatise on the philosophy of art, his writings contain such a philosophy in germ at least. Needless to say, his writings are a model of artistic style and achievement. It was left, however, to John Dewey to develop the concept of aesthetic experience and apply it to the problems of philosophy and education. In his Art as Experience,<sup>2</sup> we have not only what is perhaps Dewey's most important work, but, perhaps, the best single introduction to his philosophy as a whole. But before we go on to consider the nature of aesthetic experience, and "art" in particular, let us consider some of the factors in our society which have led men to believe that art is not integrally related to formal education, nor that it seriously concerns the affairs of daily life. In short, let us consider why art has seldom been widely valued, nor been considered to be intimately and profoundly mixed with the question of what constitutes the good life for man.

With the rise of Protestantism, and the so-called "Protestant ethic," Calvinism in the New World was to play an important role in shaping the mind and character of the American people. The Puritan Yankee found himself in a vast new land, a wilderness. There was everything to do and he had the will to do it. He was infected by the seriousness of the idea of doing God's business and he was concerned lest he waste any time. Our Puritan Yankee not only worked

hard for God, but he saved every penny he earned. Quaint sayings concerning time and money became commonplace in the tradition of American folk-lore. And a Benjamin Franklin could become a national idol.

Traditionally, the typical American has taken pride in the fact that he can get things done; that he has know-how; that he is practical. This is no idle boast, for the world is fully aware of his material success and affluence. But his sense of value is narrowly restricted, since those things he values are, for the most part, connected with economics, and expressed in terms of labor, wages, and time spent in getting a job done. In the language of his forefathers, he can say without hesitation or a moment's blush that "God's time is money." In other words, to inquire into the value of something, he can simply ask, "What is it worth?" meaning thereby, "How much does it cost?" James wrote of "the bitch-goddess SUCCESS. That--with the squalid cash interpretation put on the word success--is our national disease."<sup>3</sup> This "Yankee" attitude, which has its source in the piety of our Puritan fathers was admirable in so far as the task at hand was to conquer the wilderness or accumulate great fortunes in business and industry. But it is not fitted to answering the question of how man should live when his work is done: house, family, play, and recreation, for example. His answer, the Puritan's, is, of course, that work is never done. But time is proving him wrong. For one of the basic questions that face our society today, or soon may, is precisely that

question concerning the use of an abundant leisure life. Such a question is important; for the soul of man soon withers before the prospect of suffering life in the endless emptiness and utter tedium of unnumbered days. I do not mean to suggest, however, that art is simply a matter of having sufficient leisure. Quite the contrary, as we shall see.

As a result of what may be called the "Yankee mentality," the arts in America were not held in esteem nor regarded as essential to any program of instruction. They were simply considered frivolous and idle pasttimes not befitting the seriousness of sacred time and labor. Even, in some cases, they were scorned as wicked, devilish temptation to do evil. Under such an influence, not only did the arts in America suffer, but anyone who seriously aspired to be an artist was held to be of poor character. For almost two-hundred years, from the founding of our nation, America produced no great painters or musicians. And, except for the field of literature, no significant number of artists appeared until our own century. And yet, even today, the average American does not quite know what to make of them. While he may respect craftsmanship (where craft still counts), he otherwise frequently dismisses artists as "odd-balls" or just plain "queer." Such an attitude is characteristic of a large body of American students as well: students for whom the arts mean little or nothing at all. They take courses in the fine arts for the simple reason that they must take them in order to "get" a degree. For them, the enterprise of higher learning has value only to

the extent that it enables them to get a "good" job--i.e., one that pays well.

Another influence detrimental to the development of art, which is not only characteristic of America but the Western nations in general, is the great emphasis placed upon mathematics and science, logic and argumentation: in short, upon analytical thinking as the only means for acquiring knowledge of truth and reality. While great emphasis was placed upon the reasoning faculties of man, an almost superstitious fear or disparagement of the senses was maintained. The habit of divorcing thought from feeling has been so pronounced in western civilization that, to use a term borrowed from Lancelot L. Whyte, it may even be called the "European dissociation."<sup>4</sup> Those who have been spiritually or idealistically inclined have looked upon matter as evil, corrupt, something to be rid of, a prison of the soul, and something in constant change and utter chaos. They have sought refuge in the Eternal, the One, the Ideal, the Unchanging, or the right hand of God the Father. Their one goal, to put it briefly, was to vault beyond the actual, the material, and the real, as otherwise understood.<sup>5</sup>

In all this, however, there was an implicit, if not explicit, recognition of the power or effect of art. For while it was argued that art possessed little or no positive value, and the artist stood no higher in rank than a servant or tramp, it was well-known that art can move men by appealing to their imaginations and feelings. Edgar Wind writes:

"Although no philosopher has praised the divine madness of inspiration more eloquently than Plato, he viewed it with sharp suspicion. He rated the strength of man's imagination so high that he thought a man could be transformed by the things he imagined."<sup>6</sup> But since such feelings are part of the passionate and corruptible nature of man, such feelings must be controlled. Hence, precedents for the censorship of art go back as far as Plato. In Plato, we find a theory of education in which the role of art is taken very seriously. He knew full well that art (e.g., myths, martial music) may be used to edify man or corrupt him. And since he was concerned with the development of a perfect state, and the education of the guardians of such a state, only that art which expressed the noblest ideals would be permitted to be used for instructional purposes. It is not for nothing, then, that Plato cast Homer from the reading list, for the heroes of his epics were not always perfect men or gods.

The situation in art is by no means as bleak as I may have suggested. Art has always been practiced and it has always enjoyed some following. It is, however, with the advent of the "human" sciences that the real importance and function of art has come to be understood and appreciated. Under the influence of comparative folklore, anthropology, sociology, and psychology, the importance of the role of imagination has come to be recognized, as well as the fact that man has always been preoccupied with the use of symbols and the construction of forms. Ancient man, as well as our

primitive contemporaries, did not differentiate between art and religion. Nor were art and religion divorced from the affairs of his daily life. Almost everything he did was, in some way, connected with his art and religion, and, hence, with his view of the world. What we in civilized societies today have forgotten is, in the words of Irwin Edman, "that the shape of our world is determined by the shape of our imagination and that our imagination is shaped by the arts."<sup>7</sup> Primitive man expressed himself imaginatively and aesthetically in everything he touched, from the garments he wore, the implements he used for hunting, the vases he used to store oil or grain, his ceremonial dances and religious incantations, to the idols he carved to honor and worship his gods. Indeed, the one striking impression that we have of primitives is that they expended such great effort upon art and formal ornamentation. It can never be said that they were simply concerned with physical survival.

Whereas we have seen that art was an integral part of the life and culture of primitive peoples, it has seldom been an integral part of the life of civilized western cultures. Where it has enjoyed some stature, it has either been associated with the Church, or with privileged classes. In our time, with the "genteel tradition" of Old and New England.

The Yankee mentality, the emphasis on analytical thinking, the censorship of art, and the fact that art has so long been associated with wealthy classes who have a monopoly on

fine art,--all are factors which suggest why art has been separated from life and daily activity in American culture. They are probably not the only reasons, nor have they been sufficiently explained. But they do suggest why art has not enjoyed a greater role in our institutions of learning; or, stated more strongly, why art has only been tolerated in the curriculum but not wholeheartedly embraced.

We commonly believe that art is composed of those objects exhibited in museums, or that it is confined to the printed page, or the like; that is, that it is simply an object to be gazed upon or listened to, but not much else. We like it, or we do not like it. In any case, we do not concern ourselves with it for long. That this is so may be verified by attending to the comments of visitors to museums or by watching them pass works of art by the hundreds in a matter of moments. It is rare, indeed, to find someone giving his full attention to one painting for the whole of his visit. But to simply look upon a painting without responding to it, or to play a musical masterpiece as background to a dinner conversation, is to wholly miss the point of art. This attitude may, in part, be attributed not only to ignorance, but gross insensitivity. The "sacred fear" of art, its revelatory power and mystery, no longer hold us back in awe; for it seems that nothing can please us for long or even shock us for an instant. But in the dull recklessness of our time great art loses none of its worth: "it only loses,"

to again quote Professor Wind, "its direct relevance to our existence: it has become a splendid superfluity."<sup>8</sup>

There is a wonderful ambiguity in the phrase "the work of art" which hides the very thing we are looking for. On the one hand, it may refer to an object as the work of art, and on the other, it may refer to the artist's labor as the work of art. For the most part, when we refer to a work of art, we are talking about it in the first sense, as an object. But if we are to understand what is the full nature of art, we must also understand it as the artist's labor, or creative activity. These are not alternatives that we may elect to consider separately, but two inseparable aspects of one and the same thing.

In terms of what I have been saying, "expression" and "language" are almost synonymous terms;<sup>9</sup> for we may "speak" in the language of music, painting, sculpture, dance, words, facial and bodily motions, mathematics, science, prophecy, and so on. In the broadest view, the buildings that we erect, the laws that we write, the songs that we sing, and the work that we do, are all expressions of our being. All the expressions of individuals taken together constitute the culture in which they live. We look back to the glory that was Greece. But "classical Greece" is only a term we use for historical convenience which points to the time and works of Socrates, Plato, Pericles, Sophocles, and the countless others who, expressing their own thoughts, contributed to and created a culture now called "classic."

However, not all expressions are of equal value or of equal importance. But in so far as each one is an ordered and meaningful experience, it contributes to greater experiences which we dignify by assigning such adjectives as "beautiful" or "sublime." Those who have contributed to what we call the beautiful or sublime are commonly called artists. But they are not the only artists. We may all be artists to the degree that we imaginatively transform and express our feelings. Those whom we consider great artists are great for the reason that their expressions are more unique, proportional, intricate, well conceived, or profound. By means of vast powers they gain insight into new orders, new forms, new laws, new discoveries. This experience of discovery, of insight, of inspiration or intuition, is what is called artistic creativity or aesthetic experience. The philosopher, the scientist, the theologian, or the common man may all experience, at least at some level, this feeling of creation and discovery. It is an activity that is, or can be, shared by all who wish to express themselves.

The environment in which we find ourselves is a stream of continuous and interwoven events. In whatever situation we happen to find ourselves we react to that situation. In very ordinary circumstances we often react from sheer conditioning or habit. In others we act as befits the customs and traditions of the society in which we live. In some situations we react in an unprecedented manner, such as in an emotional response over which we have little or no

control. Yet, in other situations we act from studied deliberation, intentionally and intelligently. For that matter, all organisms react to the environment in which they live; and, depending upon their ability to meet a given situation they either survive or are destroyed. But we are not just organisms that only react to given situations from instinct or habit. We are organisms that can do things from plan, and act in particular situations in a novel or unique manner. James said that "one who is educated is able practically to extricate himself, by means of the examples with which his memory is stored and of the abstract conceptions which he has acquired, from circumstances in which he never was placed before."<sup>10</sup>

Now, from the continuous stream of experience, how do we delimit a single experience which is ordered and meaningful (an aesthetic experience) from the vast flux of experience that goes into making what we call life in general? To say of a situation that it was an experience, to use John Dewey's terminology,<sup>11</sup> is to appoint to that experience some meaning or value. We differentiate a particular experience from experience in general--which is continuous--by abstracting it from the general flux and seeing in it some form. And that form which characterizes anything as an experience is composed of three parts or phases: a beginning, a middle, and an end, to use the simplest language; or, again to follow Dewey, inception, development, and fulfillment. Let us take, for example, the following illustration. Suppose

a man is engaged in an operation in which he handles tools for the purpose of doing a certain job. If he enters upon his task with tools that are in good repair, clean and in order, uses them for the purposes for which they were intended, and then when finished he sees to it that they are all returned again to their proper place, clean and in good repair, then it may be said that what he did was aesthetic. What he did, as well as how he did, has form: he takes a tool from its place, uses it, and when he is finished he returns it again to its proper place. This simple act can be differentiated from the rest of the activities or experiences in which he might have been engaged. It was purposive and had meaning. How different this is from the life of a man who walks the streets aimlessly, or who loiters on a street corner endlessly watching the traffic go by.

An example of a more complex situation can be seen in the following: As complex organisms we possess certain needs and drives, one of which is the need for food; and as a part of our ordinary experience we get hungry. Because of our need for food we act and react to our environment in certain ways in order to satisfy this need. If part of our reaction to this need is experienced as picking fruits, or killing some animal, and then eating whatever we have secured, thus satisfying our hunger, we would only be acting and reacting to our nature and environment much as any other animal. Our behavior would be non-aesthetic. But as intelligent human beings we do not generally live in this manner. Because

experience has taught us that with the passing of time we get hungry, we prepare to satisfy this need more practically, economically, and successfully. We build fires, ovens, pots, and pans; we cultivate crops, raise animals, and design weapons for the purpose of hunting. Already our ordinary experience of hunger has caused us to react in a number of ways related to satisfying this need--but it does not end here. We plan various recipes, we use spices and condiments, we arrange the table so it is pleasing to the eye; we use fine silver and china, and even linens and beautiful floral arrangements. In other words, we do things and use objects far beyond the purpose of just satisfying a basic need. Although the initial goal is to satisfy a basic need, subsequent acts both deliberate and purposive effect a consummation of this goal in such a manner that whereas means before were irrelevant to that goal, they are now important both in that they become incorporated in and modify what the final outcome of that goal will be. The three-part logical division of aesthetic form can now be viewed as one event, viz., an experience.

From the on-going flux of our experience we take an aspect of that experience and point to a time, a place, or an object because it had for us both meaning and value; and that particular experience is fondly remembered because of some pervasive characteristic which defines it. What I have tried to illustrate by this long example is that we do not act or react in some almost passive and determined way as do one-

celled animals, but that much of human behavior is pervaded by a sense of volition and purposiveness; and that what we do, we do for reasons far beyond any immediate need.

An experience is valued for its immediate contribution to our general well-being and happiness and also for what it contributes to subsequent experiences. We look back upon past experiences sometimes with joy and sometimes with sadness. But past experiences are not just dusty memories put away in the closet of mind: they are our best teachers and they are the standards by which we judge new experiences. The common expression, "We all learn from experience," is true, for really there is no school that is not experience. Now we all learn in this manner, but the degrees of our knowledge vary with the capacities of each individual. Our ability to interpret our past experiences and to judge the value of new ones determines to a large extent what we are and what we do; for only by interpreting correctly our past experiences can we hope to carry on successfully something in the present, and even plan for something in the future.

As an experience is complete in itself, it is a whole. It is something distinct from everything else by its very definition. If it were not distinct or complete in itself we would not recognize it, and hence could not learn from it. Every experience ought to be valued because in some way we can benefit from it. Each experience should be valued in and for itself; but the greatest value of any experience is that which it contributes to greater and

greater wholes, or experiences. In this sense, then, any particular experience is never said to be complete, for its meaning changes and is modified by the circumstances in which it is employed. For example, we may listen to a concerto by Mozart. It may be unfamiliar, yet it pleases us. However, upon subsequent hearings we may become increasingly aware of things that we did not recognize when we first heard it. As we continue to recognize new features in it, we can look back upon past hearings and see that they were not complete. Whereas our first hearing was pleasurable, it is not seen to be meager compared to our fuller understanding at the present. The quality of our pleasure is now enhanced by a greater knowledge of the concerto. Without having first experienced the concerto, however, our present knowledge and pleasure would be that much poorer.

I have used the example of a concerto, but this principle--learning from experience--applies to everything; for it applies to what we call development, growth, or progress. Those who eat only raw flesh may satisfy their hunger and may even enjoy it. But he who eats only raw flesh, though it nourishes his body and gives him some satisfaction, lacks knowledge. On the other hand, he who enjoys the varieties which nature has to offer may occasionally eat a bad apple, but it is a bad apple only in so far as he knows what good apples are. He has knowledge.

Adam and Eve, before their Fall, lived in a state of paradise, a state in which ignorance was bliss. Of the trees

in the Garden they could eat all, save one. (The beguiling words of the serpent are too familiar to bear repeating.) When Adam and Eve had eaten the apple of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they gained knowledge; but in so doing they sacrificed something else. The point that I have been laboring is simply this: that without numerous and varied experiences we remain static and life becomes a humdrum existence both monotonous and tedious;<sup>12</sup> and that endless repetition creates in man a sense of purposelessness so that whatever spark may have been in him is soon extinguished for lack of fuel and heat of flame; and that when man does taste of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge--that is to say, experiences as fully as possible the world about him--he gains knowledge; but in gaining knowledge he loses his sense of contentment and satisfaction afforded in the innocence of believing that God is in his heaven and all is right with the world. When J. S. Mill wrote that "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied,"<sup>13</sup> I believe that he was voicing a similar sentiment.

Experience, then, is the fertile soil in which the countless seeds of the human imagination are engendered. In this soil some seeds are destined to grow normally and naturally into pregnant buds which in time blossom forth and bring into being beautiful and delicious fruit; but other seeds of the imagination, by their very nature are sterile and destined to remain dormant, or perhaps even die. Yet

another kind of seed is that sown in the blindness of fury and passion; however, it too takes root, but the time of its inception is hidden in the darkness of ignorance. The progeny of such a union is hybrid: some of the offspring may manifest normal and healthy characteristics; yet the near relations may be grotesque and monstrous. We do not know what they will be until they are suddenly upon us. The seeds of the human imagination which are brought forth from the soil of human experience are the ideas that men have. And though they are at first without size or shape they do in time manifest themselves in what men do. They possess great force and momentum and concrete reality.

Since the time of Adam and Eve--since the "Age of Innocence"--man has been fruitful and his experiences have multiplied. And since man ventured to eat of all the fruit of the garden he also came to know pain and suffering, sin and evil. And since the parents of us all first sinned, God forever denied to man the fruit of the Tree of Life. Man must die. Some men, upon learning that they are born to die, are at a loss to see in life a meaning and a purpose. With the idea of death as an end, the idea of life loses its meaning for them. Their error lies in believing that only ends are important, and that the means are irrelevant. But in terms of experience, as it has been outlined, means are as important as ends, or of even greater importance, for in this case, the means are daily life itself.

Together with the knowledge of good and evil, man was given the opportunity to choose between them. And paraphrasing a popular Platonic myth, when once the lover of beauty has caught sight of the eternal and perfect beauty, he is likened to that earthly lover who having once glimpsed a pure and charming maid forever seeks to find her again and win her unto himself. What I have been saying boils down to this: that when man learns from experience what those things are that are good for him, he endeavors to seek after them; for this means to seek after his own happiness and well-being. Not to seek after his own happiness is unnatural and perverse. (It is naive to believe, however, that this does not occur, for, unfortunately, this is sometimes the case, as when, for example, a man takes his own life.) And perhaps the greatest good that a man may possess is knowledge of himself. I mention this not because it is an original idea, but rather, I wish to reaffirm the wisdom contained in an ancient oracle, "Know thy self." Together with this, I would also like to reaffirm another saying that is equally famous, "Nothing is excess." In short, we seek after truth: truth about ourselves, and truth about the world around us.<sup>14</sup> And if we are to be honest, we cannot deny truth its liberty of appearing.

Since we all cannot express ourselves with great originality and profound feeling or sensitivity, we turn to those who can. And in terms of our own experiences we recreate their emotions through the medium of their expressions, i.e.,

through the medium of their art. This is possible since we share similar emotions and feelings. This is what we do when we listen to music, or read a poem, or are moved by a drama. The range of human expressions is vast indeed; but whatever can truly be said to be an expression--that is, whatever possesses aesthetic form--is art.

To throw something in a fit of anger, or just "blow off steam," is not really to express ourselves; it is simply an outbreak of emotion over which we have little or no control. Expression is a species of that wider term "act" and refers to subsequent behavior which is deliberate and intelligent. A similar point was made by Wordsworth when he wrote that poetry "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity. . . ." <sup>15</sup> When we are really said to have expressed ourselves we can look back to the time when we threw something and describe the incident to someone. The manner in which we "speak" of our anger is our expression. We may talk about it; we may use the incident in a poem or novel; or we may even try to capture its spirit and dynamic quality in a painting or musical composition. Any one of these modes might have been the language in which we sought to express ourselves; and in whatever language we do express ourselves, it is art. The expression of emotion, then, is the subsequent, objective representation of some original, spontaneous feeling. Again, to quote Wordsworth, "the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, similar to that which was

before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind."<sup>16</sup> In a sense, then, art is the product both of the activity of expression and the representation of that emotion in some objective form.

Whereas some definitions of art are so narrow as to exclude much that is otherwise commonly held to be art, the present definition may be open to criticism on the grounds that it includes too much. I think that criticism would be just if art here only meant painting or music or whatever happened to come under the vague term "fine art." In the context in which we have been using the term, the meaning of "art" is much broader. It is a reversion to the more ancient usage where art is a way of expressing feeling or emotion or passion.

In its original meaning "art" signified a skill or technique. It comes by way of the Latin ars, from the Greek word techné. It implied a way of doing things. Even the term "poetry" (poësis) literally means a kind of making. The term "fine art" is only of recent origin and generally refers to those objects which are exhibited in museums. But art is not just paint on canvas nor so many words on a piece of paper: art is also ourselves expressed in some objective form. It is action and reaction to the things about us. It is the way that we interpret our experience. Art is the common stuff of our ordinary experience transformed by our imaginations into ordered and meaningful relationships. It is an activity that is, or can be, shared by all who wish to express

themselves. But let us get back to ancient terms to see what we can make of them.

For the Greeks, "theory" (theōria) meant "a beholding" or "spectacle." It is related to the English "theatre" (theasthai) which, literally, means "to see." The Greeks, however, viewed theōria not as idle speculation, but as a power of reason (nous), a peculiar kind of vision. It was a power frequently attributed to poets. Essentially, theōria is an insight, or comprehensive vision. For the poet, it is a vision of life as a dramatic thing. Hence, the poet may "see" something others cannot; but by means of his art, the craft of poetry, he can enable others to become aware of his vision. What does he see? Aristotle says in his Poetics:

It is, moreover, evident from what has been said, that it is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened, but what may happen,--what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity. The poet and the historian differ not by writing in verse or in prose. The work of Herodotus might be put into verse, and it would still be a species of history, with metre no less than without it. The true difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen. Poetry, therefore, is more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular.<sup>17</sup>

Poetic vision (theōria) for the Greeks was not, therefore, an idle imagination or day-dream, nor was it a mere play with words. As has already been said, in its literal meaning "poetry" implies a making. And to be able to make something implies, in turn, having skill. Thus, a poet was a skilled craftsman in making "situations" which were credible or possible, according to the laws of probability or necessity,

as Aristotle says. In Sophocles' drama, Oedipus Rex, Teiresias, the blind seer or prophet, is possessed of a vision of impending doom; not because he has miraculous powers, but he can "see" the end toward which things are moving.

Art, in Aristotelian terms, is imitation of the processes of nature, not the imitation of natural objects as such. Hence, in the art of tragedy, the tragedian imitates that aspect of nature called the actions of men.<sup>18</sup> Although historical figures--for example, Oedipus or Agamemnon, given that they are historical figures--may be the protagonists of some drama, that which the drama is about is not necessarily concerned with their biographies: rather, it is concerned with what may happen, given certain initial premises. In one sense, the poet as prophet may foretell of impending destruction; but in another, his vision may be of an as yet unfulfilled possibility of goodness and perfection in man.

Although we have been concerned in the above example with the poet as dramatist, it should be clear that the term "poetry" is not confined to the arts of literature. A poet, in the sense in which we are now using the term, may be skilled in music, painting, sculpture, or any of the other forms of making or invention. And what the poet makes is not an object as such, but he expresses, presents, objectifies, what he sees. He presents us with a dramatic situation. While the material object may be carved from cold, hard marble, the dramatic situation (spectacle) it embodies

beckons us to participate in its action. If only we would relive the spectacle expressed, by imaginatively recreating the situation that is objectified, we may vicariously share those joys, hopes, sorrows, and fears that have attended the careers of men from time immemorial and, thereby, gain for ourselves a vision of life perhaps otherwise closed to us by the limitations and circumstances of our own life and experience. Art as the vision of life and the world enables us to see, to know, things in a way remote from the accidents of time and place. It therefore enables us to see things truly and universally, for under the aspect of eternity, as Spinoza would say, we may see more clearly their necessity. By seeing and knowing things in their necessary and universal aspect, we can better understand ourselves when reflecting upon what our life has been, is now, or may become in the future.

In terms of the above analysis, no sharp line can be drawn between art on the one hand and science on the other. For art as doing and science (scientia) as knowing are but two aspects of one and the same activity. The phrases "knowing what to do" and "knowing how to do it" suggest this relation. "Knowing what" implies judgment and evaluation--intelligence: "knowing how" implies craft and technique--creative ability. Furthermore, such activity is guided by an imaginative awareness or vision--theōria. It is meaningful activity in that it expresses the real or the possible according to the laws of necessity. Art can never

express what is impossible. (I do not deny that grotesque and monstrous images created by a deranged mind are art, since even they exist as imaginative visions of the world.) And, lastly, art is sharable activity since it is universal. I mean by this that the creative activity of art, while always an individual, particular thing, may, nevertheless, be similarly expressed or re-created by all who wish to do so; that is, that the dramatic situation embodied in the work of art as a formal, public, enduring object, may always be re-enacted by those who wish to play the roles as artists.

In terms of experience in general and an experience in particular, together with the notion of learning from experience, there is an implicit standard of judgment. Whereas each experience is good and valued in and for itself as an experience, in the total context of a life, or even a culture--that is to say, greater wholes or experiences--we can evaluate particular past experiences. Whereas a particular experience may have been good in itself (was emotionally satisfying to the experiencer, though perhaps perverted psychologically or illegal), in its larger context it may be bad for the person whose experience it was, or wrong in terms of the laws of the society in which he lives. Although the consequences of an expression may be unfortunate, it nevertheless remains that an individual must remain free to express himself.<sup>19</sup> Of course, I do not mean that after repeated wrongdoing an individual should remain free from punishment: punishment is itself an experience and if the

individual is sane he should learn from it. But I do mean that unless an individual is free to express himself he, and for that matter we also, shall never know what the nature of his unborn experience was. We would remain quite ignorant, and even in the long run perhaps do greater harm.

The common good of individuals is freedom of expression, and the freedom to gain the knowledge of what we are. If collective experience is history, then we would do well to read it and not repeat it, as Santayana suggests. And if our own expressions fail to satisfy our expectations, we may turn to those whose profound visions are the lasting monuments and highest moments of what human experience is and can be. Art at its lowest may be license to do evil. But in those highest moments of interpretation and transformation of experience it may appear as a sonnet in which is captured the eternal essence and beauty of love itself.

Art, or aesthetic experience, need not be limited to such activities as poetry, painting, music, sculpture--that is, to those things commonly called art. Its scope may range over such activities as physics and mathematics as well as physical education and home economics. To include home economics in a theory of art does not demean art. It only suggests that the daily life of a human being need not be viewed as a hum-drum existence in a wretched everyday world. Indeed, the whole effort of a supreme artist, Frank Lloyd Wright, was dedicated to elevating and intertwining the home and the life in it to a level of great aesthetic

achievement. Since our earliest education takes place in the home, it should be the place where we first encounter those formative visions of goodness and beauty.

In the case of James himself, the most significant part of his education took place at home. In the home of a somewhat eccentric and doting father, Henry James, Sr., the upbringing of the James children was an educational experience. In a family of "gifted children," the main dish at supper was typically some provocative thought which the father tossed out and which was seized upon and picked apart by the entire family.<sup>20</sup> The elder James not only believed in the liberty of his children, but he sought as far as possible to create an atmosphere of freedom in which everyone was able to express his own mind or challenge and criticize the opinions of others. Like his father, William James treated each man as an individual thinker with intrinsic interests and power to make new truths and values. He was not only a radical pluralist philosophically, but he was a radical individualist as well. Life for him was not something to be served up on a golden platter; it was something each man should hammer out and fashion for himself from experience, like a work of art. As Maurice Baum has pointed out,<sup>21</sup> a survey of all of James's writings on education would reveal that his primary concern was for the individual: the discovery, preservation, and enrichment of his experience.

Although James never founded a school of philosophy and few, if any, philosophers today would call themselves

Jamesians,<sup>22</sup> the main ideas he put forth are by no means dead in professional circles. James was not concerned with system building, and his philosophy does not purport to find a place for all the furniture of heaven and earth. But if he was not systematic in the German sense of the term, he surely was systematic in another sense. For taken in their entirety, his works contain, at least implicitly if not always explicitly, a theory of knowledge, meaning, and truth, an ethic, a cosmology, a philosophy of religion, and a philosophy of education. In a wider sense, as Paul Henle has observed,<sup>23</sup> his works are not only systematic, but they reveal a consistent attempt to deal with the fundamental questions of philosophy in terms of relatively few concepts. And, as I have endeavored to indicate, underlying the whole structure of James's thought is the fundamental notion of experience. Not raw experience, which is void and without form: but experience that is shaped by an active intelligence into expressive objects of thought and feeling.

## CHAPTER V

### EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOR

In 1892, James was asked to deliver some lectures on psychology to teachers in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In large part, although simplified for his particular audience, these talks were drawn from his two volume Principles of Psychology. Together with three essays addressed especially to students, these talks were subsequently published in book form in 1899 under the title Talks to Teachers on Psychology: and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals.<sup>1</sup> This work, the only book which James wrote on education, was not only widely read in his own time, but it continues to enjoy considerable recognition today. Jacques Barzun, for example, places it first on his list of "particularly good reading."<sup>2</sup> However, because it is non-technical and, as James said, "practical and popular in the extreme," it has largely failed to receive the wide respect that it deserves among academicians.

James's Talks to Teachers contains in substance what we may consider to be his philosophy of primary and secondary education. His thoughts on higher education are expressed in various addresses and tributes which he delivered at commencements and reunions. The tributes (to two great teachers), "Louis Agassiz" (1896), and "Thomas Davidson:

A Knight-Errant of the Intellectual Life" (1905), together with such essays as "The Ph.D. Octopus" (1903), "The True Harvard" (1903), "Stanford's Ideal Destiny" (1906), and "The Social Value of the College-Bred" (1908), are included in his posthumous volume, Memories and Studies.<sup>3</sup> These constitute James's major efforts to deal with the questions of education in a popular and practical way. While comprising but a small body of work, these essays and addresses nevertheless add greatly to the literature on educational psychology and philosophy.

Let us first turn to James's discussion of the aims of education and the art of teaching.

For James, the process of education "consists in the organizing of resources in the human being, of powers of conduct which shall fit him to his social and physical world."<sup>4</sup> In short, education is best described by calling it "the organization of acquired habits of conduct and tendencies to behavior."<sup>5</sup> Given that this is the aim of education, one great maxim which no teacher ought to forget emerges immediately: "No reception without reaction, no impression without correlative expression."<sup>6</sup> An impression (what behaviorists would call a "stimulus") which in no way modifies a pupil's active life by leading to an appropriate expression ("response"), is an impression gone to waste. The impression/expression cycle is incomplete. Consequently, a new habit of conduct or tendency to behavior cannot be acquired. Only when an impression leads to motor consequences in the form

of an activity can the mind have a "sensation of having acted and connect itself with the impression."<sup>7</sup> Even the older method of learning by rote, and then repeating what we learned word for word, rested upon the important insight that verbal recitation is an important kind of reactive behavior. If a student simply sits back and soaks up information, like a sponge, without learning to react to the meaning and value of the things which confront him, we may rest assured that no significant, purposive change in his behavior will result.

Early in his "Talks" James cautions teachers not to expect too much by way of immediate practical results. While psychology is a science and can be useful to the classroom teacher, one should not expect to be able to deduce definite programs or methods of instruction for immediate schoolroom use. Where "scientific psychology" was experiencing something of a boom, and there was a great deal of talk about the "new psychology," from James's point of view there was no new psychology worthy of the name. "There is nothing but the old psychology which began in Locke's time, plus a little physiology of the brain and senses and theory of evolution, and a few refinements of introspective detail, for the most part without adaptation to the teacher's use. It is only the fundamental conceptions of psychology which are of real value to the teacher; and they, apart from the aforesaid theory of evolution, are very far from being new."<sup>8</sup>

While there are, of course, some principles worth talking about, and which can be adapted to the teacher's use, it is not simply a matter of learning what they are: it is, more importantly, a matter of knowing how to apply them in practice. As James said, "Psychology is a science, and teaching is an art; and sciences never generate arts directly out of themselves. An intermediary inventive mind must make the application by using its originality."<sup>9</sup> In his endeavor to reach his audience, James's main desire was to make teachers "conceive, and, if possible, reproduce sympathetically in their imagination, the mental life of their pupil as the sort of active unity which he himself feels it to be."<sup>10</sup> The science of logic never made a man reason correctly, and a knowledge of ethics never made a man act morally. Similarly, to have a knowledge of psychology is no guarantee that anyone shall be a good teacher. But it may help by laying down lines within which the rules of the art of teaching must fall.

We have already indicated the value of verbal recitation as a form of reactive behavior. But as useful as verbal reactions are, they are not sufficient in terms of the total process of education. A pupil must keep notebooks, make drawings, work with his hands, enter in the laboratory and perform experiments, and so on. One of the most significant innovations in James's time was the introduction of the manual training schools. Such schools, James argues, are important not for the reason that they will give

us people better skilled in trades, but "because they will give us citizens with an entirely different intellectual fibre."<sup>11</sup> Beside developing habits of observation and experimentation, laboratory and shop work engender honesty; "for, when you express yourself by making things, and not by using words, it becomes impossible to dissimulate your vagueness or ignorance by ambiguity."<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, in learning to do things for himself, a pupil acquires a habit of self-reliance, which is one mark of individualism that James cherished.

Man is a creature with an inclination to do more things than he has ready-made "circuits" for in his nervous system.<sup>13</sup> He is, as Aristotle said,<sup>14</sup> a creature who by nature desires to learn. He can form new habits or tendencies to act not only because he desires to learn, but he has a very plastic body and nervous system. It is very important that teachers should understand the nature of habits and how they function in the process of education. To this end, James's discussion of habits and habit-formation is masterful and unsurpassed.

When we use the word "habit," we generally use it pejoratively: that is, we tend to talk about "bad" habits, such as the smoking-habit or the swearing-habit or the drinking-habit. As James noted, we seldom, if ever, talk about such things as the moderation-habit or the courage-habit. But the fact of the matter is that our virtues (where we have any) may be just as habitual as our vices. We are totally subject to the law of habit as a consequence of the

fact that we have (are?) plastic bodies with complex nervous systems. As James defines the term, "plasticity" means "the possession of a structure weak enough to yield to an influence, but strong enough not to yield all at once."<sup>15</sup> In light of this, one is led to the view that habits are not characteristic of men alone. The Law of Habit extends to all nature.<sup>16</sup> A sprained ankle is in danger of being sprained again. A once inflamed joint is more prone to a relapse. A suit, after having been worn, clings to the shape of the body better than when it was new. A lock works better after some use. A river flows in a channel which grows broader and deeper. And so on. Likewise, our nervous systems grow and take shape, if you will, in the manner in which they have been exercised, as a sheet of paper or a suit, once folded or worn, tends then to fall into the same identical folds, shapes, patterns, or grooves. In short, the first time a thing is done, it is done with some difficulty. But with repetition or practice, like playing a musical instrument, it becomes less difficult and more automatic. Habit takes over and frees the conscious mind to do more interesting or important business. Habit becomes second nature; even "ten times nature." We are, as James said, "stereotyped creatures, imitators and copiers of our past selves."<sup>17</sup> The greatest part of our adult life consists in habitual behavior. The way we shave in the morning, or tie our shoes; the way we eat and talk are largely automatic. We become for the most part mere bundles of habitual responses.

Since education is for behavior, and habits are the stuff of which behavior consists, as James said, then "the greatest thing in all education is to make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy. . . . For this we must make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can. . . . The more of the details of our daily life we can hand over to the effortless custody of automatism, the more our higher powers of mind will be set free for their own proper work. There is no more miserable human being than one in whom nothing is habitual but indecision, and for whom the lighting of every cigar, the drinking of every cup, the time of rising and going to bed every day, and the beginning of every bit of work are subjects of express volitional deliberation. Full half the time of such a man goes to the deciding or regretting of matters which ought to be so ingrained in him as practically not to exist for his consciousness at all."<sup>18</sup> In view of the great importance to successful living later in adult life, it follows that the teacher's greatest task should be to encourage in his pupils those habits that shall be most useful and beneficial to them throughout life. Consistent with this aim, James proposes several maxims which ought to be followed if one is to be successful in the formation of new habits of conduct. They are:

1) We must take care to launch ourselves with as strong and decided an initiative as possible.

2) Never suffer an exception to occur till the new habit is securely rooted in your life.

3) Seize the very first possible opportunity to act on every resolution you make, and on every emotional prompting you may experience in the direction of the habits you aspire to gain.

4) Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day.<sup>19</sup>

In sum, there are two basic functions that we assign to habits: first, a habit simplifies the attainment of a given end and diminishes fatigue in its attainment while, as a rule, making the result more accurate; and second, a habit diminishes the conscious attention which otherwise would be required to achieve some end. It makes our actions more automatic, thus allowing the mind to engage itself in more interesting and higher activities.

The hell to be endured hereafter, of which theology tells, is no worse than the hell we make for ourselves in this world by habitually fashioning our characters in the wrong way. Could the young but realize how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state. We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone. Every smallest stroke of virtue or of vice leaves its never-so-little scar. The drunken Rip Van Winkle, in Jefferson's play, excuses himself for every fresh dereliction by saying, 'I won't count this time!' Well, he may not count it, and a kind Heaven may not count it, but it is being counted none the less. Down among his nerve-cells and fibres the molecules are counting it, registering and storing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out.<sup>20</sup>

Beyond what is purely physical, there is an ethical dimension to habit as well. For within certain limits, man is able to make himself, even, to remake himself. If we could not change our habits, it is doubtful that an infant

would ever stop sucking his thumb. We need not be condemned by our present habits to eternal sameness; but by effort of will or conscious choice, we may change them. Habits are by nature conservative. They are "the enormous fly-wheel of society, its most precious conservative agent."<sup>21</sup> However, whereas bad habits may conserve the worst defects in an individual or race, good habits may conserve what is best and most desirable by way of human thought and action.

Habits are related to one's interests. And one's interests are related to those things which have meaning and value relative to one's goals or purposes. The most fundamental purpose that underlies all things is survival or continued maintenance of the body. As Spinoza said, each thing endeavors to persevere in its being or identity.<sup>22</sup> Roughly, there are two kinds of interests: native interests, and artificial or acquired interests. Native interests, broadly speaking, lie primarily in bodily sensations; sensations which, for the most part, concern the physical well-being of the individual. Acquired interests are generally learned through being associated with objects that are natively interesting. For an adult, most interests are in fact artificially acquired. But interests are not merely limited to physical survival. They include all those objects, or sensations, which are useful to us or which advance our pleasure and happiness.

According to James, the native interests of children are wholly limited to sensation.<sup>23</sup> Unless a teacher can

relate some new idea to a child's native interests, he is almost doomed to failure so far as the advancement of the child's interests are concerned. The teacher must always compete for the child's attention with the other things in the immediate environment: with the spitballs that Johnny is throwing, or the faces that Tommy is making, or the dog-fight in the street, or the fire engine that is screamingly rushing by. Frequently the child (adults too) will pay more attention to the physical characteristics of the teacher--the way he moves his hands, or stutters, or writes on the blackboard--than to what the teacher is saying. "Living things, then, moving things, or things that savor of danger or of blood, that have a dramatic quality,--these are the objects natively interesting to childhood, to the exclusion of almost everything else; and the teacher of young children, until more artificial interests have grown up, will keep in touch with her pupils by constant appeal to such matters as these. Instruction must be carried on objectively, experimentally, anecdotally. The blackboard-drawing and story-telling must constantly come in."<sup>24</sup> Such methods, however, are limited. They take in only the first steps in the process of acquiring new interests.

In order to advance from merely native interests, there is a simple "law" that relates them to new interests, viz., "Any object not interesting in itself may become interesting through becoming associated with an object in which an interest already exists. The two associated objects grow,

as it were, together: the interesting portion sheds its quality over the whole; and thus things not interesting in their own right borrow an interest which becomes as real and as strong as that of any natively interesting thing."<sup>25</sup> For example, a geography lesson on Southeast Asia may take on greater interest by being associated with the war in Viet Nam and the place where a child's father or older brother is fighting. Or, in the case of an adult, a man may become interested in the affairs of his local City Council because of some immediate problem connected with his own property and home. It would be a mistake, however, to believe that all things may be made immediately interesting. Some things may not. On a given occasion, in such cases, we must approach a child differently. For example, we may simply appeal to his fear of punishment.

Education, in short, means "little more than a mass of possibilities of reaction."<sup>26</sup> And the art of teaching consists in bringing about new reactions which are felt and expressed by a pupil as genuinely as the native reactive tendencies they replaced. "Every acquired reaction is, as a rule, either a complication grafted on a native reaction, or a substitute for a native reaction, which the same object originally tended to provoke."<sup>27</sup> Native reaction include Fear, Love, Curiosity, Imitation, and Ambition. We all have a fairly clear notion what the first three reactions refer to. We need not concern ourselves with them. However, as James uses the remaining two, they are not quite so clear.

Imitation leads to Emulation, which is "the impulse to imitate what you see another doing, in order not to appear inferior. . . . Emulation is the very nerve of human society."<sup>28</sup> Ambition slides into Pugnacity and Pride. Pride and the fighting spirit in man have often been looked upon as sinful or unworthy passions. Yet, for James, they are the springs of most human effort. They are deeply rooted in our animal nature and are directly related to survival values. However, since we no longer swing from trees, nor prey upon our fellow human beings for daily sustenance, we need not conceive the pugnacious tendencies in man so crudely. Pride and pugnacity are human traits which can be construed in terms of a general unwillingness to be beaten. It is the spirit of achievement in the face of danger, or the sense of satisfaction in having accomplished a difficult task, or just plain being "Number One." In their more refined and noble forms, pride and pugnacity play an important part in the process of education. Unlike Rousseau,<sup>29</sup> who forbade every form of rivalry between one pupil and another, and never let his Émile be compared to other children, James believed in the ideals of competition and arduous achievement as essential to the development of a spirited and enterprising character. Following Mill, James wrote that a character is a completely fashioned will; and a will is an aggregate of tendencies to act in a firm and prompt and definite way upon all the principal emergencies of life.<sup>30</sup> For James, soft pedagogics had taken the place of the old steep and rocky path to

learning. The bracing oxygen of effort had been left out. He said, "It is nonsense to suppose that every step in education can be interesting. The fighting impulse must often be appealed to. . . . The teacher who never rouses this sort of pugnacious excitement in his pupils falls short of one of his best forms of usefulness."<sup>31</sup>

James's writings continually emphasize the central importance of interest in the process of education. His brief chapter on interest in his Talks has been widely influential. Whereas James considered instinct the beginning of all interest, he did not overlook the role of learning in acquiring new interests. It was James who first emphasized the relationship between stimulus and response. (As we have indicated, he called them impression and expression.) The very concept of experience, as defined in Chapter 4, grows out of the notion of reactive behavior. When we reflect upon the history of the progressive education movement and the child-centered school, we find much that reminds us of James. John Dewey, William Kilpatrick, John Childs, and Harold Rugg, for example, were profoundly influenced by him.<sup>32</sup> James's influence is clearly apparent in scores of books on educational theory and practice. While James's name is infrequently mentioned, his thought and influence run deep. His very language has become a part of the way we think and write.<sup>33</sup> Through his numerous examples and his effective, simple style of expression in the Talks, James's thought has directly passed on to tens of thousands of teachers. Less

directly, his influence could be felt in schools and colleges through the many texts that were soon published after his Principles. Most textbooks in psychology in the decades following 1890 were patterned after James's monumental work. Angell,<sup>34</sup> Thorndike,<sup>35</sup> Royce,<sup>36</sup> Woodworth,<sup>37</sup> Seashore,<sup>38</sup> McDougall,<sup>39</sup> and others, either directly or indirectly pay James tribute or acknowledge their debt to him.

Whereas James stands like a giant on the scene of intellectual history, his works are not as well known today as they deserve to be. In this connection, Allport made the following comment in his Introduction to a recent edition of James's Psychology, Briefer Course: "One reason is that he wrote at the end of the Victorian era, just before Freud and American behaviorism made their shattering onslaught on contemporary thought. . . . Their surging popularity soon made James seem old-fashioned, perhaps even a bit pious. But now that we have recovered from the irreverent shocks administered by Freud, Pavlov, Watson, we begin to perceive that the psychological insights of James have the steadiness of a polar star. The present-day student is a wiser scientist and practitioner if he is acquainted with this beacon."<sup>40</sup>

So far, our discussion of James's philosophy of education has been largely confined to a consideration of the "mechanics" of learning. We have been concerned primarily with the art of teaching from the point of view of understanding how a teacher may approach a child for the purpose of redirecting his behavior by appealing to his interests.

The only aim of education that we have considered is the general one of bringing about in a child appropriate responses. We have not even mentioned what such responses should be, except that they promote the well-being and happiness of the individual. In short, we have been concerned with the concept of learning, but not with the content of value of what should be learned. We shall now discuss the aims of education in terms of those values James deemed most worthy of pursuit.

When James sent a copy of the Talks to Teachers to a friend, he wrote: "Pray don't wade through the Teacher part, which is incarnate boredom. I sent it to you merely that you might read the essay 'On a Certain Blindness,' which is really the perception on which my whole individualistic philosophy is based." James's talks to teachers are not, of course, "incarnate boredom." But neither are they the most important or exciting part of his book. The three addresses to students, as well as the other addresses mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, center upon certain few themes which get at the very heart of James's philosophy and which constitute some of his most impassioned writing. In discussing the aims of education below, we need not differentiate between the aims of education in elementary and secondary schools, or those of college. For James, they are the same. While we may approach the aims differently at different levels, the nature of the aims differ only in degree, not in kind. Broadly speaking, the fundamental aim of education

is a moral one: to actualize in human experience those dispositions which constitute the highest and noblest forms of human action.

The perception upon which James's pluralistic, or individualistic, philosophy rests, and to which he made reference above, has to do with the belief that life is shot-through with values and meanings which we often fail to notice because we are insensitive to them. We cannot see things that others see, nor can we feel things that others feel. Values and meanings are there for others, but unless we see and feel them in the same way, they form no part of our world.

Every Jack sees in his own particular Jill charms and perfections to the enchantment of which we stolid onlookers are stone-cold. And which has the superior view of the absolute truth, he or we? Which has the more vital insight into the nature of Jill's existence, as a fact? Is he in excess, being in this matter a maniac? or are we in defect, being victims of a pathological anaesthesia as regards Jill's magical importance? Surely the latter; surely to Jack are the profounder truths revealed; surely poor Jill's palpitating little life-throbs are among the wonders of creation, are worthy of this sympathetic interest; and it is to our shame that the rest of us cannot feel like Jack. For Jack realizes Jill concretely, and we don't. He struggles toward a union with her inner life, divining her feelings, anticipating her desires, understanding her limits as manfully as he can, and yet inadequately, too; for he is also afflicted with some blindness, even here. Whilst we, dead clods that we are, do not even seek after these things, but are contented that that portion of eternal fact named Jill should be for us as if it were not. Jill, who knows her inner life, knows that Jack's way of taking it--so importantly--is the true and serious way; and she responds to the truth in him by taking him truly and seriously, too.

May the ancient blindness never wrap its clouds about either of them again! Where would any of us be, were there no one willing to know us as we really are or ready to repay us for our insight by making recognizant return? We ought, all of us, to realize each other in this intense, pathetic, and important way.<sup>41</sup>

The way we come to share meanings and values is to enter into another's world. If we can see why he values what he does, or why something has meaning for him, we shall be less intolerant or impatient of him. By entering into the life-world of another, we may even come to know and understand and love things which otherwise would have no meaning, or perhaps existence, for us. While each of us necessarily lives in a private world of our own consciousness, we may, to a greater or lesser extent, imaginatively enter into the world of others. As James would have every teacher conceive and imaginatively enter into the active life of her pupil, so every student should aim to enter into the active life of others. Where we sympathetically and imaginatively enter into the life-worlds of great men, we have an opportunity to encounter great values. And it is the actions of great men that James would have us emulate. We ought to take up as our own their standards of conduct and ideals of achievement.

In answer to the question of the value of a college education, James said "The best claim that a college education can possibly make on your respect, the best thing it can aspire to accomplish for you, is this: that it should help you to know a good man when you see him."<sup>42</sup> Stated differently, a college education ought to prepare one to recognize

and value human excellence: "The feeling for a good job anywhere, the admiration of the really admirable, the disesteem of what is cheap and trashy and impermanent,--this is what we call the critical sense, the sense for ideal values. It is the better part of wisdom."<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, "to have spent one's youth at college, in contact with the choice and rare and precious, and yet still to be a blind prig or vulgarian, unable to scent out human excellence or to divine it amid its accidents, to know it only when ticketed and labelled and forced on us by other, this indeed should be accounted the very calamity and shipwreck of a higher education."<sup>44</sup> Human excellence in all things,--that, then, is the highest aim of education. In Harvard, James found an institution which fostered such aims and nurtured the souls of her independent sons. For James, the true Harvard is "an inner spiritual Harvard."<sup>45</sup> It is not for the sake of show or prestige that a serious student would attend Harvard, but because "of her persistently atomistic constitution, of her tolerance of exceptionality and eccentricity, of her devotion to the principles of individual vocation and choice. . . . The true Harvard is the invisible Harvard in the souls of her more truth-seeking and independent and often very solitary sons."<sup>46</sup> Like a contagious disease, such values pass from man to man by contact. "Education in the long run is an affair that works itself out between the individual student and his opportunities. . . . Above all things, offer the opportunity of higher personal contacts."<sup>47</sup> For James,

"The wealth of a nation consists more than anything else in the number of superior men that it harbors."<sup>48</sup> And the place where the greatest geniuses should gather is the university. There they should mingle and congregate freely and everlastingly for the purpose of advancing truth and enhancing the quality of human life. In such terms, on the occasion of his delivering the address on founder's day, James conceived the ideal destiny of Stanford.<sup>49</sup>

Administrators who look to James for a plan or a method will be disappointed. He had none. What James did have, however, was great vision. If we fail to share his vision of a kind of new Academy, it may be due to a certain blindness on our part. For James, the aim of education is to actualize in human experience those values deemed best; and the art of teaching consists in getting the student to see what they are. The only qualifications that a teacher need possess are the wit and power to bring a student to the brink of new horizons. The art of teaching is, in short, the art of getting another human being to feel, to see, to experience something new for himself.

James was such a teacher. Above all, he makes us see and feel things concretely--really. In the classroom, he was the same as he was everywhere else--kind, sympathetic, tolerant, stimulating, and charming. He couldn't bring himself to speak dogmatically, but, rather, he would qualify what he said with an if or maybe. As James Angell has written: "He was never afraid to make a mistake if only it were honest,

and he started off on a new tack when he found himself in error, as though fallacy were a regular part of the day's work."<sup>50</sup> While he often over-estimated the capacities of many of his students, this was only his way of putting them on "their mettle to make good his estimate."<sup>51</sup> He could not abide long-winded arguments or complicated proofs. His temperament was too quick for that. And he had an enormous dislike of stuffy, scholarly jargon. Once he read Spencer's definition of evolution in class:<sup>52</sup>

Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity.

And then he went on to translate it:

Evolution is a change from a no-howish, untalk-aboutable, allalikeness to a somehowish and in general talkaboutable not-allalikeness by continuous stick-togetherations and something-elsifications.

When it came to good teaching and what it takes to be a good teacher, James had a good deal to say. This is especially the case when it comes to the matter of requiring a college teacher to have a doctorate. The only degree James earned was the M. D. He never earned a B. A., an M. A., or a Ph. D., and he couldn't see why it was necessary to hold a doctorate to be able to teach.

In his "Ph. D. Octopus," James tells about an incident in which a brilliant Harvard student of philosophy received an appointment to teach English literature elsewhere. However, no sooner had the new instructor been appointed, than the

board of governors made the awful discovery that he did not have the Ph. D. While at Harvard, perhaps foolishly, he had been content to study philosophy for its own sake. Now, however, his new President informed him that his appointment was to be revoked immediately, unless, of course, he could procure a Harvard doctor's degree prior to taking up his teaching that next fall. The candidate could not complete his thesis to the satisfaction of his committee in time for spring graduation. Although it was original and brilliant (subsequently it was recognized to be the most outstanding contribution in metaphysics from Harvard), it didn't read like a dissertation. Alas, the candidate was in fear of losing his appointment. James and his colleagues wrote enthusiastic letter upon letter in support of the candidate. Finally, their eloquence and apparent conviction prevailed. The candidate got the job--but only on the condition that he secure the degree by the next spring. To make the story short, the candidate finished his work in philosophy and earned the right to append those sacred letters (Ph. D.) after his name. Whether or not his having a degree in philosophy enabled him to teach English literature any better, was a question that continued to trouble James. It was also the question that occasioned his essay.

The point of James's essay is that the doctorate shows nothing about one's teaching ability. Already in his time it had become the union card of the college teacher. And anyone who seriously aspired to become a college teacher,

but who entered the educational market without a Ph. D., was in for a hard time. Colleges, large and small, cared little what the area of specialization was in, or whether it had bearing upon the instructor's ability to teach in the field for which he was hired. The demand for the Ph. D. was for show. It looked good in a catalogue to list nothing but doctors of philosophy. As Barzun has pointed out, "From the time when William James first raised his voice against the three-letter fetish . . . the number of doctorates obtained in course has doubled and redoubled. . . . Few administrators choosing a prospective teacher have ever been known to read his dissertation . . . they merely want to know it exists."<sup>53</sup> The time and money involved in taking the Ph. D. makes membership in a college faculty "the most expensive and least luxurious club in the world."<sup>54</sup> Since James first warned us against the spreading and menacing tentacles of the octopus, the situation in education seems to have gotten even worse.

In 1876, twenty-seven years before he published his attack on the Ph. D., James wrote an article entitled "The Teaching of Philosophy in our Colleges."<sup>55</sup> In this article, his earliest piece on higher education, he stated some of his most characteristic views; views from which he later never departed. In a letter to the Nation, Stanley Hall expressed his dissatisfaction with the way philosophy was then being taught. Hall was a tough-minded experimental psychologist, and he felt that philosophy was being too tightly controlled by the presidents of institutions of

higher learning who were for the most part ministers of the Gospel. As such, while men of good character, Hall argued that they were not qualified to teach philosophy. They might edify students in the direction of good morals, but such fare would hardly give rise to youthful impulse and curiosity in matters of science. On these points, James was in full agreement with Hall. In responding to Hall's letter, James took the opportunity to give his own views on the teaching of philosophy. But while his thoughts were expressed in relation to philosophy, it is quite clear that he intended to extend them to cover the whole field of higher education.

James wrote, "If the best use of our colleges is to give young men a wider openness of mind and a more flexible way of thinking . . . then we hold that philosophy . . . is the most important of all college studies. . . . However sceptical one may be of the attainment of universal truth . . . one can never deny that philosophic study means the habit of always seeing an alternative, of not taking the usual for granted, of making conventionalities fluid again, of imagining foreign states of mind. In a word, it means the possession of mental perspective. . . . As for philosophy, technically so called, or the reflection of man on his relations with the universe, its educational essence lies in the quickening of the spirit to its problems. What doctrines students take from their teachers are of little consequence provided they catch from them the living, philosophic attitude of mind, the independent, personal look at all the data of life, and the eagerness



to harmonize them. . . . In short, philosophy, like Moliere, claims her own where she finds it. She finds much of it today in physics and natural history, and must and will educate herself accordingly.<sup>56</sup>

If the philosophic attitude is an attempt to enlarge the understanding of the scope of application of every notion which enters into current thought, then it is clear that philosophy enters into most, if not all, aspects of human experience. As James's pragmatism is a new name for some old ways of thinking, so his thoughts on philosophy and education are a restatement of the old idea of education for humanitas. The connection between James and the ancient world can be drawn no better than by quoting a few remarks by R. R. Wellman with reference to Cicero:

For Cicero, as well as for the ancients generally since the time of Socrates, the categories of thought involved in all philosophical discourse were moral categories; the process of comprehending, or better, doing philosophy--for philosophy in its most important sense was an ars--necessitated thinking in moral terms which, in terms of the continuity between thought and action, meant being moral. Leading the moral life, therefore, was a matter of actualizing in human experience those dispositions which were equivalent to the categories of thought embedded in philosophy; hence philosophy educated the man of humanitas, the good man, by cultivating in him a moral Weltanschauung within the context of its discourse.<sup>57</sup>

The point of higher education is to push forward the frontiers of knowledge, to speculate, entertain hypotheses, to generate ideas. In short, to be philosophical. Under the ideal of humanitas all other matters are subsumed; for the ideal of humanitas is the source of all purposive

activity and value. The process of education should emphasize creation and discovery, not mechanical routines or the excavation of lifeless data. The function of a college teacher is simply to guide a student in his search for a perspective and help him to avoid what is useless or otherwise unfruitful. But this requires that the teacher have something of humanity himself. According to James, it is to the needs of the student that a teacher should direct his efforts, not to the satisfaction of the demands of some curriculum which prescribes what shall be taught and how it shall be presented.

In James, the notion of "doing your own thing" finds a supreme champion. However, for a large number of students, the life of mind has become an occasional affair. That is, they find little satisfaction in performing routine assignments or classroom chores. The best of them simply retreat to some quiet place and pursue their own interests in silence and isolation, if not despair. When the university no longer challenges them, but they simply go through the motions of getting a degree for the sake of gaining admission to the world at large as a college graduate (man of letters?), the idea of education for humanitas sounds like a false and hollow thing. Their attendance at a university is not marked by their enthusiasm for it as an ideal community of scholars, but, rather, by the stark necessity of having to acknowledge that they are there because it is a matter of getting and

eating one's daily bread. For without a college degree, there is little hope of enjoying the kind of opportunity that we envision for ourselves.

Were James alive today, one could easily imagine him leading a demonstration to the Administration Building in protest of some silly regulation that was being enforced. One could imagine him in the midst of the drug question, or see him stoutly defending his views with regard to American policies in Southeast Asia. But one would also see him defending the right of others to express their views. James would defend a colleague whose contract was not renewed because he didn't publish his quota of articles, although he may have otherwise been an outstanding teacher and member of the faculty. Social evils, like mental disease, would consume his effort as well as money. An aspiring young author would receive a sympathetic reading of his work and a thoughtful note from James. And students would always get a hearing and a kind word to boot. He was truly a man among men.

James had a profound sense of what is right and good, and he had an equally profound sense of what is not. Many of the problems which confront us today were already apparent in his time, and he warned us what to expect if we continue our course. For one thing, the life and growth of a university should be measured in terms of human happiness and achievement. And this means that education must be relevant to those ends. Having distinguished professors on campus doesn't mean a thing if they don't teach and students never

meet them. And towering buildings in themselves signify nothing; for bricks and mortar soon crumble into dust. The true university, for James, exists in the minds and hearts of men: its students and teachers alike. With prophetic insight, James warned us of the problems that would befall us should we close our eyes to the ideals of humanitas and choose instead to follow the bitch-goddess, Success, who beguiles men down the path of cupidity.

It is impossible to summarize the views of so germinal a thinker as William James. It is likewise impossible to weigh his influence such that, without doing injustice to him by oversimplification, we convey a meaningful evaluation of his influence. But to hazard a guess, his most important and lasting influence has been indirectly felt by those who accepted his ideas and incorporated them into their own views. Unlike Dewey, for example, James did not concern himself, except for the Talks to Teachers and some informal addresses, with the problems of education as such. He was not pedagogically or administratively inclined. But his influence as a teacher was great upon all those who came into contact with him.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps the best short characterization of James the man, as well as the nature of his influence as a teacher, is found in the following, concluding statement by Ralph Barton Perry, James's great biographer:

James did not found a school, He was incapable of the patient brooding upon the academic nest that is necessary for the hatching of disciples. The number of those who borrowed his ideas is

small and insignificant beside the number of those that through him were brought to have ideas of their own. His greatness as a teacher lay in his implanting and fostering of intellectual independence. He prized his own university for its individualism and tolerance, and for the freedom which it gave him to subordinate the scholastic office and the scholastic method to a larger human service. So the circle of his influence widened to the bounds of European civilization; while his versatility, his liberal sympathies, the coincidence of his ruling passions with the deeper interests of mankind at large, and above all the profound goodness of his heart, so diversified and humanized this influence that there were few indeed too orthodox or too odd to respond to it.<sup>59</sup>

## NOTES

## NOTES

### INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup>"William James and His Message," Contemporary Review, XCIX (1911), 31.

<sup>2</sup>F. Knight, William James (London: Penguin Books, 1950), 50.

<sup>3</sup>Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy (New York: A Doubleday Anchor Book, 1962), 18.

<sup>4</sup>Op. cit., 32.

<sup>5</sup>The Writings of William James (New York: Random House, 1967), xi.

<sup>6</sup>Harvey Wish, Society and Thought in Modern America (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), Chapter 13.

## NOTES

### CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1890. 2 vols. Reprinted, complete and unaltered, by Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1950.

<sup>2</sup>See Gardner Murphy, Historical Introduction to Modern Psychology (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1949), 195.

<sup>3</sup>"The Principles," Psychological Review, 50 (1943), 121.

<sup>4</sup>Harold Rugg, Foundations for American Education (Yonkers-on-Hudson, N. Y.: World Book Company, 1947), 97.

<sup>5</sup>Psychology: Briefer Course (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1892). Abridged reprint, ed. Gordon Allport, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961).

<sup>6</sup>Talks to Teachers on Psychology: and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1899). Reprinted, ed. Paul Woodring (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1958).

<sup>7</sup>The terms "evolutionary theory" and "evolutionism" have been deliberately selected because they are vague. Evolutionism covers not only specific biological theories--e.g., Darwin's theory of natural selection--, but broad socio-cultural ones as well--e.g., Spencer's evolutionary philosophy--which include such notions as progress, perfectibility, struggle, individualism, exploitation of the weak, and so on. The number of terms and interpretations is plethoric, and serves to indicate the degree of importance of the concept in question.

<sup>8</sup>As Gardner Murphy has written: "Of all the nineteenth century currents most fundamentally congenial to him, because so closely related to such personal needs, the most important was evolutionism; an evolutionism which meant creativeness through struggle, the primacy of the immediate task to be done over any abstraction which is removed from life." Historical Introduction to Modern Psychology, 194.

<sup>9</sup>The ancients, however, generally tended to view the biological character of species in terms of fixed, immutable forms.

<sup>10</sup>See, for example, Condorcet's The Progress of the Human Mind, in which he traced human history through nine epochs or stages to the French Revolution. He predicted that the 10th stage would usher in the age of ultimate perfection of man.

<sup>11</sup>Strictly speaking, the term "theory" applies not to evolution, but to Darwin's hypothesis of natural selection. In the phrase "theory of evolution," the term evolution explains nothing. It is itself in need of explanation. The evolution of species is explained by means of the theory of natural selection. Another point. In his work of 1859, Darwin was only concerned with an account of the origin of species. Hence any criticism that the theory of evolution does not explain the origin of living things, especially man, misses the point. Beyond the single statement that "light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history," Darwin did not discuss man at all. The "light" that he cast upon the origin of man was presented in The Descent of Man (1871).

<sup>12</sup>Whereas Darwin's The Origin of Species is his most famous work, it was, perhaps, his The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals (1872) that had greater relevance and importance for James's work in psychology.

<sup>13</sup>In 1875, and for several years following, James used Spencer's Principles of Psychology as a text in his course called "Physiological Psychology." Beginning in 1879, he gave a course in "The Philosophy of Evolution," which used Spencer's Principles of Philosophy. See Edwin G. Boring, "The Influence of Evolutionary Theory upon American Psychological Thought," in Evolutionary Thought in America, ed. Stow Persons (New York: George Braziller, 1956), 275-276.

<sup>14</sup>James's Principles of Psychology, I, 225, 284-290. Hereafter we shall simply refer to this work as the Principles.

<sup>15</sup>Herbert Spencer, Principles of Psychology, 3rd ed. (New York: D. Appleton, 1896), I, 293.

<sup>16</sup>"Remarks on Spencer's Definition of Mind as Correspondence," Journal of Speculative Philosophy, XII (1878), 1-18; reprinted in James's Collected Essays and Reviews (New York: Longmans, Green, 1920), 43-68. References are to the reprinted paper in Collected Essays.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 51.



<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 49.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 49-50.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 67-68.

<sup>21</sup>Principles, I, 8.

<sup>22</sup>For example, we do not choose to become a man any more than an acorn chooses to become an oak tree. Hence, while "manhood" and "oakhood" are natural ends relative to man and acorns, just becoming what we are determined to become naturally (i.e., biologically) cannot be the main point of James's teleological test. Whatever the reasons are that there should be oak trees, or men, they are not tree-reasons or man-reasons. Such "purposes" are simply not of our own design.

<sup>23</sup>Such a view assumes that the Cosmos is a kind of living, intelligent thing which has purposes of its own. On this view, our role in the "life" of the Cosmos might correspond to something like the role cells play relative to bodies. Every cell has an end(s) relative to the health and normal functioning of the body. But as cells, they do not exist in and for themselves. They exist for the sake of the life-system they help support. In brief, while each cell exhibits purposive activity, no cell "chooses" its own ends: hence, no cell is free to act intelligently.

The above analogy is, of course, fallacious, and we cannot directly attribute such an argument to James. But, on this matter, we cannot be sure what James would have believed, for his remarks indicate an ambivalence which leaves the question undecided. He says: "Just so we form our decision upon the deepest of all philosophic problems: Is the Kosmos an expression of intelligence rational in its inward nature, or a brute external fact pure and simple? If we find ourselves, in contemplating it, unable to vanish the impression that it is a realm of final purposes, that it exists for the sake of something, we place intelligence at the heart of it and have a religion. If, on the contrary, in surveying its irremediable flux, we can think of the present only as so much mere mechanical sprouting from the past, occurring with no reference to the future, we are atheists and materialists" (Principles, I, 8).

As this passage seems to illustrate, each of us may decide what we will. But unless we are prepared to live with contradictions, we cannot believe both that the Cosmos is teleological and not-teleological: both that we are free, and that we are not free. Nevertheless, James, here and always, seems so prepared. This question is at the heart of his thought and reappears to haunt him throughout life.

<sup>24</sup>Principles, I, 141.

<sup>25</sup>James says: "Now the study of the phenomena of consciousness which we shall make throughout the rest of this book will show us that consciousness is at all times primarily a selecting agency. Whether we take it in the lowest sphere of sense, or in the highest of intellection, we find it always doing one thing, choosing one out of several of the materials so presented to its notice, emphasizing and accentuating that and suppressing as far as possible all the rest. The item emphasized is always in close connection with some interest felt by consciousness to be paramount at the time." Principles, I, 139.

<sup>26</sup>A note on terminology: In Chapter VII of the Principles, James discusses his search for some general term which can be used to designate all states of consciousness whatever. However, most of the terms he comes up with he finds objectionable. For example, "mental state," "conscious modification," "modification of the ego," "subjective condition," "psychosis," "affection of the soul," and "idea," are all awkward and have no kindred verbs. On the other hand, the term "feeling" not only has the verb "to feel," but it has such derivatives as "feelingly," "felt," "feltness," and so on, which, given James's style, makes it very useful. However, it has other meanings as well, in which cases it is often used as a synonym of "sensation," as opposed to thought. "Thought" would perhaps be the best candidate, except that in some cases it too is awkward. For example, "thought of a pain" and "feeling of a pain" seem to connote two different states. In his seeming desperation, James settles for both "feeling" and "thought" and intends to use them synonymously, accordingly as they make sense in the context in which they occur. "If we could say in English 'it thinks,' as we say 'it rains,' or 'it flows,' we should be stating the fact most simply . . ." (Principles, I, 224-225). In using "thought," we must be careful to avoid the temptation of identifying it with what is "purely mental" as opposed to what is physical. Perhaps "thought-feeling," or vice versa, more nearly approximates James's intention.

<sup>27</sup>Psychology: Briefer Course, 151. The Principles was often referred to as the "James," whereas the Briefer Course was affectionately known as "The Jimmy."

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 151. Elsewhere James says, "It is astonishing what havoc is wrought in psychology by admitting at the outset apparently innocent suppositions, that nevertheless contain a flaw. . . . The notion that sensations, being the simplest things, are the first things to take up in psychology is one of these suppositions" (Principles, I, 224).

<sup>29</sup>Principles, I, 224.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 488. To ask what a child experiences before he experiences anything is a meaningless question. Awareness is always awareness of something, an object, event, or quality with which we are already acquainted. We cannot explain the passage from non-awareness to awareness by comparing consciousness to a light switch, for example, in which there are two clearly defined states: one "off," the other "on." Rather, the passage is "rheostatic." For whereas at first objects of consciousness are but dimly perceived, they become more clearly defined as we cast more light on them.

<sup>31</sup>James's term for this "neutral stuff" is pure experience. To some extent, the concept of pure experience owes something to Chauncey Wright. See Edward H. Madden's Chauncey Wright (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1964), 130.

<sup>32</sup>Principles, I, 1.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., I, 1. Literally, "phenomenon" means "that which appears." From an epistemological point of view, we can roughly take it to mean, "that which is known through the senses rather than through the intellect or intuition." See John Wild, The Radical Empiricism of William James (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1969), Chapter 1. Wild feels that the emphasis upon phenomena is significant from the point of view of James's "phenomenological psychology."

<sup>34</sup>For James, "Mind" is only a class name for minds, which are objects in a world of other objects. Whatever is named by "Soul" not only plays no part in empirical science, but from the point of view of theory, it is a superfluous hypothesis. See Principles, I, 183.

<sup>35</sup>Principles, I, 225, 271-284.

<sup>36</sup>While mind-states are dependent upon body-states as necessary conditions for existence, James is not proposing an epiphenomenalistic theory of mind. For as body-states conditions and lead to mental activity, mind-states also effect changes in the body. But it would be erroneous to say that body-states cause mind-states, or that mind-states cause body-states. Although James is not very clear initially, it becomes more apparent that his dualistic interactionism is more programmatic and pedagogical in nature than it is metaphysical.

<sup>37</sup>While it is true that mind and body, loosely speaking, affect each other, it is also true that "together"

(i.e., as the individual) they meet, interact with, and are conditioned by the external world of things, events, or other persons. James's interactionism is two-pronged: for minds, so to speak, not only "inhabit" bodies, but "mind-bodies" inhabit environments; and in such environments, mind-bodies not only react to the exigencies of the situation, they in turn act on them as well.

<sup>38</sup>Principles, I, 185.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., I, 185. When James says that no one has questioned the fact that consciousness of some sort goes on, he means to imply something stronger, viz., that no one can question it seriously. It is a fact which we can know indubitably, at least of ourselves, when we think.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 185. James's italics.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 224. By "thinking," James here means every form of consciousness indiscriminately.

<sup>42</sup>For this James must share part of the blame. He was unsystematic and often inconsistent. His language was colorful but his remarks were too unguarded. He tried too hard to communicate his ideas to masses in popular and familiar terms. And he trusted too much to the good will and intelligence of his audience or readers. For all the praise given him as a popular speaker, James actually hated lecturing. In plain fact, he often did it just for the money. He really meant to be a serious philosopher but he died before he could get down to the business of putting his intellectual house in order. On this point it is instructive to quote a letter to F. C. S. Schiller. Speaking of his reluctance to accept the Hibbert Lectures, James wrote: "I accepted because I was ashamed to refuse a professional challenge of that importance, but I would if it hadn't come to me. I actually hate lecturing; and this job condemns me to publish another book written in picturesque and popular style when I was settling down to something whose manner would be more strengwissenschaftlich, i.e., concise, dry, and impersonal. My free and easy style in Pragmatism has made me so many enemies in academic and pedantic circles that I hate to go on increasing their number, and want to become tighter instead of looser. These new lectures will have to be even looser; for lectures must be prepared for audiences; and once prepared, I have neither the strength to re-write them, nor the self-abnegation to suppress them." Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James, 2 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1935), II, 583.

When all is said and done, it nevertheless remains that his brilliant metaphors became perilous slogans which stood

in the way of clear understanding and consequently hurt every cause that James endeavored to champion.

<sup>43</sup>Chapter IV of the Principles is entitled "The Stream of Thought." In the Briefer Course and the Talks to Teachers, James uses the title "The Stream of Consciousness."

<sup>44</sup>First published as "The Laws of Habit," Popular Science Monthly, 30 (1887), 433-451. Reprinted in Principles as Chapter IV. Subsequently published separately as Habit, many editions.

## CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>In the Principles, James distinguishes five characteristics of the stream of thought, whereas in his Briefer Course he only mentions four. In his Talks to Teachers his discussion of the stream is reduced to such simplistic terms that it altogether fails to convey his meaning. (One is tempted to speculate that James did not even seriously attempt to get his ideas across here. He simply refers to the stream of consciousness because he was expected to.) The characteristic of thought which he omits from these later works has to do with the fact that consciousness "always appears to deal with objects independent of itself." Such an omission is unfortunate, for James's vital discussion of the relationship between thought and object has been overlooked almost completely. And such an oversight in effect causes us to miss the whole point of James's theory of mind and its relation to the world which appears to it. From the point of view of modern-day phenomenology, this is one of James's most important contributions. His analysis of the problem of consciousness and its relations to the world has placed James in the forefront as an early or proto-phenomenologist. See, for example, Hans Linschoten, On the Way towards a Phenomenological Psychology, tr. by Giorgi (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1968). Also Bruce Wilshire, William James and Phenomenology: A Study of "The Principles of Psychology" (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968). And John Wild, The Radical Empiricism of William James (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1969).

<sup>2</sup>Principles, I, 225.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., I, 225. In endeavoring to analyze thought as part of personal consciousness, James is fully aware of the problem that "personal consciousness" is one of the terms in question. However, in order to get on with the investigation, he says that we must plunge in the middle of things as regards our vocabulary and use terms that can be adequately defined only later. Since, according to James, everyone knows what these terms roughly mean, it is only in a rough way that they should now be taken (op. cit., 225). The notion of plunging into the middle of things is a methodological necessity. For

if we knew perfectly well what we mean by such terms as personal consciousness, self, mind, and thought, no investigation would probably be necessary.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 225-226.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 226.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Such a view is, of course, solipsistic. The argument for solipsism has been stated in the following way by F. H. Bradley: "I cannot transcend experience, and experience must be my experience. From this it follows that nothing beyond my self exists, for what is experience is its (the self's) states." Appearance and Reality, 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 218.

<sup>8</sup>Principles, I, 230. On this point, James is, of course, taking an extreme stand. Not only would he say that a particular sensation of red--could not occur twice in exactly the same way, but, so it seems, he is also committed to the view that the proposition "Two plus two equals four" could not occur in experience a second time in exactly the same way. Such a conclusion seems odd--a "piece of metaphysical sophistry"--even to James (op. cit. 231)! However, strictly speaking, the point of his argument is that we have no proof that a given state of consciousness is experienced more than once by a given individual in exactly the same way.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 231.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 232.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 236.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 233. In the above passage, "must" refers to the fact that because of physiological changes in the brain, it is not possible to experience a given fact-before-me-now as I may have experienced it on another, different occasion. While the object may remain the same, I have changed in the meanwhile.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 232.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Hans Linschoten, On the Way Toward a Phenomenological Psychology, 69-72.

<sup>15</sup>Here is what Hume had to say about personal identity: "For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain

or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception. When my perceptions are remov'd for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of myself, and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions remov'd by death, and cou'd I neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate after the dissolution of my body, I shou'd be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is farther requisite to make me a perfect non-entity." A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1958), 252.

<sup>16</sup>E.g., I tasted a new wine, read a new book, gained a pound in weight, and so on.

<sup>17</sup>Principles, I, 238-239.

<sup>18</sup>Logically speaking, if it were possible for minds to identify, then it would make no sense to speak of them as different minds. They would be identical--one system of thoughts, one state of consciousness. The point here seems to be not that there cannot be two or more distinct bodies living through the same state of mind or consciousness; but, rather, they could never know that. A given state of mind would always appear as my state and not another's. This follows from James's first characteristic, viz., that thoughts tend to be part of a personal consciousness. Here, even the word "tends" is deliberate. For in those pathological cases of multiple-personality, the "secondary personal selves . . ." form conscious unities, have continuous memories, speak, write, invent distinct names for themselves. . . ." Principles, I, 227-228.

<sup>19</sup>Principles, I, 237.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., I, 225.

<sup>21</sup>Descartes wrote in a letter: "I had good reason to assert that the human soul is always conscious in any circumstances--even in a mother's womb. For what more certain or more evident reason could be relevant than my proof that the soul's nature or essence consists in its being conscious, just as the essence of a body consists in its being extended? A thing can never be deprived of its own essence." E. Anscombe and P. Geach, Descartes: Philosophical Writings (Edinburgh, 1954), p. 226. On this problem, also see Norman Malcolm, "Dreaming and Skeptism," The Philosophical Review, XLV (1956), 14-37.

<sup>22</sup>Principles, I, 240.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., I, 240.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 241.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 242. Cf. Aron Gurwitsch, "William James' Theory of the 'Transitive Parts' of the Stream of Consciousness," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, III, 449-477.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., I, 243. The division of thought into transitive and substantive parts is an exercise in analysis. In reality we do not have two parts, only thought itself viewed from two different perspectives. James's partiality for either "feeling" or "thought" as synonymous designations of consciousness generally, is not nearly so indecisive as one might first suspect. Both cover the same phenomenon, but from different points of view, so to speak--the subjective and the objective. Feeling is related to the transitive parts and is subjective. Thought is related to the substantive parts and is objective. Knowledge of is acquaintance with things through the experience of feeling them. Conception is knowledge about things in thought.

<sup>27</sup>David Hume, loc. cit.

<sup>28</sup>Principles, I, 251.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., I, 255.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 258.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 260.

<sup>32</sup>As Linschoten has remarked, "Between 'feeling' on the one hand and 'thought' on the other, there exists a real difference; but only in the sense that 'thought' is a special kind in the category 'feeling.' Because of their essential relationship James at a later time abandoned that twofold division and speaks in general of 'experience.'" On the Way Toward a Phenomenological Psychology, 154.

<sup>33</sup>Principles, I, 260, 255.

<sup>34</sup>In a letter describing his manner of composing, Mozart says first bits and crumbs of a piece join themselves in the mind, then the soul takes over and the thing begins to grow, and "I spread it out broader and clearer, and at last it gets almost finished in my head, even when it is a long piece, so that I can see the whole of it at a single glance in my mind, as if it were a beautiful painting or a handsome human being; in which way I do not hear it in my imagination at all as a succession--the way it must come later--but all at once, as it were. It is a rare feast! All the inventing and making goes on in me as in a beautiful strong dream. But the best of all is the hearing of it all at once." Quoted by James, Principles, I, 255 fn.



<sup>35</sup>Principles, I, 260.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., I, 260.

<sup>37</sup>We must further assume that we do not know the solution. Once we have learned, say, the multiplication tables, we do not have to search for the solution (i.e., think), we know it. Genuine thought, when successful, involves some discovery, e.g., that two times two equals four. The "solution" subsequently is not the product of thought, but habit. We merely recite a formula without benefit of thought, unless, of course, the question "How much is two times two?" continues to puzzle us.

<sup>38</sup>Principles, I, 269. While James's illustration is perhaps helpful in clearing theoretical questions, the example illustrates no real situation. For according to his own analysis of the privacy and uniqueness of thought, no two individuals would ever be likely to start from the same point. Even if it were possible, they would never know it.

<sup>39</sup>As Harold Rugg has pointed out, this is one of James's most important contributions, but one which has been too much neglected by educators and psychologists alike. Foundations for American Education, 92.

<sup>40</sup>Principles, I, 225.

<sup>41</sup>Strictly speaking, there can be no such state of mind as a thought about nothing. If, for example, I were to ask someone what he is thinking about, and he answers, "Nothing," then I am entitled to conclude that he was not thinking.

<sup>42</sup>The term "intentionality" is principally associated with the views of Franz Brentano. In his Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte (Leipzig: Meiner, 1874), he described intentionality as that which characterized the essential feature of mental phenomena as opposed to that which is non-mental. Loosely, thought is always directed upon an object: it is referential. More specifically, "thoughts contain objects in themselves by way of intention" (op. cit., Vol. I, Bk. II, Ch. 1). In short, thoughts refer to things. See Roderick M. Chisholm's careful analysis, Perceiving: A Philosophical Study (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1957), chapter 11. James's term for intentionality was "conception" (Principles, I, 461f). For a discussion of James's usage, see Hans Linschoten, On the Way Toward a Phenomenological Psychology, 181.

<sup>43</sup>In holding that thought and object cannot be independently conceived, James does not mean to suggest that one can be reduced to the other. Unlike the idealists, who hold

that objects exist by virtue of their being known and that mind exists insofar as it thinks about things, James holds that objects have an independent existence without the mind.

<sup>44</sup>Principles, I, 459.

<sup>45</sup>Here, of course, "know" is ambiguous. On the one hand, I have an uncomfortable sensation which I feel (know) directly. (And, without doubt, it is uniquely my sensation.) On the other hand, the sensation is identified as heartburn. Here, I know that I have a certain common, minor ailment. In knowing that I have heartburn, I have come to learn what heartburn means. The object of thought, therefore, is not a sensation, it is a meaning.

<sup>46</sup>Principles, I, 272.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., I, 460. The principle of constancy is expressed as follows: "The same matters can be thought of in successive portions of the mental stream, and some of these portions can know that they mean the same matters which the other portions meant." Stated differently, "the mind can always intend, and know when it intends, to think of the Same." Op. cit., 459. In affirming the fundamental importance of the principle of constancy, James does not thereby deny importance to the logical principle of identity, or, for that matter, any other so-called law of thought. He holds that the laws of logic are just that, laws of logic. That is, they are truths about language systems, not facts about our physical world. For example, in asserting "p implies p," we know nothing whatever about our life-world, only that a given proposition implies itself. James does not demean the role of logic in conceptual thought, he simply recognizes the limitation of manipulating symbols in the hope of discovering what is real or, perhaps, supporting our faith in what we take to be real. At best, logic can tell us what is or is not possible (e.g., a contradictory state of affairs), but it cannot bolster our confidence one jot as to what states of affairs do in fact obtain.

<sup>48</sup>Principles, I, 460.

<sup>49</sup>Here it may be instructive to point out that "we" refers to the collective experiences of men, not simply the private, subjective experiences of the individual. In this regard, the pragmatism of James has been greatly misunderstood. He is not nearly so subjectivistic as we are wont to believe. On these questions, James is much closer to C. S. Peirce than is generally acknowledged.

<sup>50</sup>Principles, I, 275.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., I, 276.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 279.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 461.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 463.

<sup>56</sup>The formula, if you will, for the "construction" of Jamesian objects--i.e., things--may be expressed in the following way: "S:  $aRb \rightarrow O$ ." Briefly, given some state of the neutral stuff, S, the meaning of S is objectified in consciousness whenever the function of conception (R) relates (a) the conceiving state and (b) the neutral state, which are codeterminants of S, such that the object of thought (O) means S, the given state, and no other.

The term "matter" is intended to be understood in the most inclusive, neutral sense possible, in which case, for example, physical change or process is only one instance. Following James, I wish to allow for the possibility of other instances matter, for example, the "matter" of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Some thoughts have as objects mere fictional entities; others, entia rationis, like "difference" and "nonentity." See Principles, I, 461.

<sup>57</sup>Principles, I, 284.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., I, 284.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 285.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 285-286.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 287.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 288-289.

<sup>65</sup>"The Sentiment of Rationality," Mind, IV, 317-346; reprinted in Collected Essays and Reviews (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920).

<sup>66</sup>Essays in Radical Empiricism (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912), 42.

<sup>67</sup>For Hume, the "necessary connection" in events was simply a fiction based upon expectation and previous experience of things appearing to be sequentially related. "The

mind never perceives any real connection among distinct existences." A Treatise of Human Nature, 636.

<sup>68</sup>Principles, I, 245-246.

<sup>69</sup>Or, as the case may be, a "subject" of discourse.

### CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>Principles, II, 283.

<sup>2</sup>The meaning of any cognitive object can be expressed propositionally, either "factually" or in the form of a "belief-statement" about it. By "fact," I mean, simply, any statement of the form "X is \_\_\_\_\_," where the blank is to be filled by some predicate without reference to the speaker. I do not mean to imply, however, that a "factual" statement is necessarily true. It may be false. I only mean that, given there are no other qualifications, a statement purports to be true of a given state-of-affairs. Whether or not it is in fact true is another matter.

The term "statement" refers to a string of words which purports to be either true or false of a given state-of-affairs; or, to use Jamesian language, aspect of the "neutral stuff." States-of-affairs simply are. The term "state-of-affairs" is taken to be primitive, undefined. Strictly speaking, the value of any statement is either truth or falsehood: and only statements have those values. Where a given statement corresponds to a given state-of-affairs, the statement is true. Where it does not correspond, it is not true. The simplest definition of "statement," then, is "that which is either true or false." Where a given string of words is neither true nor false, it is conceptually meaningless. I wish here to avoid further complication which may result were we to also speak of truth in connection with, say, "poetic" statements or "metaphysical" utterances. We shall follow the convention that all statements are either analytic or synthetic.

By "belief-statement," I mean any factual statement that is prefaced by some reference to the speaker and his attitude toward the strength of the truth-claim he is making in his statement. Belief-statements take the following form: "I believe (know, suppose, guess, etc.) that. . . ." Here the dots are to be replaced by some statement. Perhaps the simplest way to deal with belief-statement is to follow John Urmson's analysis of "parenthetical verbs" (Mind, LXI, 1952, 192-212). Strictly speaking, parenthetical verbs are not part of the statement. They add nothing to the meaning of a statement as such but act as clues or signals to the hearer as to what kind of feeling or emotion or degree of certitude is to be attributed to a statement when it is uttered. In

every genuine statement there is an implied claim to the truth of the assertion by the person who utters it. The claim to truth need not be very strong however. In fact, the whole point of some parenthetical verbs is to "modify" or weaken the absoluteness of claims where we simply assert some bald statement. Such verbs as know, believe, guess, suppose, estimate, and so on, can be used to indicate the kind of evidence one has for a statement and, thereby, warn the hearer what degree of reliability is being claimed. Hence, when a speaker says "I believe that. . .," he is in effect making an assertion that something is the case, but. . . . Here "but" refers to the nature of the evidence one has for what is being asserted. When one says "I believe," he is making an assertion, more or less confidently, about some state-of-affairs. Furthermore, when we assert a statement, S, we not only imply that S is true, or at least offer some kind of qualification in support of our claim, such as "I believe" or "I guess," but there is also an implied claim to the reasonableness of S. Unless a speaker is lying or abusing the language, whenever he utters the statement "S," he is warning his hearer that his utterance is only probably: but it is reasonable to believe it.

Following Urmson, we shall adopt the convention whereby the syntactical function of "know," "believe," "suppose," etc., will be understood parenthetically. That is, as metagrammatical adjuncts which function in the total act of communication to warn, orientate, or otherwise bring to the hearer's attention how a statement is to be taken, but which form no part of a statement as such. Hence, we may take as paradigmatic the following case: "I believe (know, suppose, etc.) that p," where "p" is the proposition being asserted.

Technical philosophers of knowledge have a predilection for explicating "know" in what is called the strong sense. In this sense, "I know that p" is equivalent to "I am certain that p." However, since "I am certain that p" implies that "p" is true, the statement "I know that p" is redundant. We may simply assert "p." Properly, then, the only case in which we could use "know" would be in those situations where what is being asserted is beyond question. However, if we explicate "know" in the strong sense, there are probably no cases in which we could use it without stating a falsehood, except where the statement in question is analytic--i.e., either tautologous or self-contradictory. Empirically speaking, the class of true statement is infinitesimal, if not empty. We are seldom, if ever, certain of anything in this world. In view of such limitations, we must reject the strong sense of "know" and accept some weaker definition if the term is to serve us at all. In the paradigm case above, "believe" is used to cover every degree of assurance, including the weakest conviction as well as the highest possible certainty.

<sup>3</sup>James uses "practical" in its traditional, philosophical sense, in which it is opposed to what is merely theoretical, ideal, or contemplative. Hence "practical activity" refers to concrete experience in the real world of time and space. On this matter, James has been terribly misunderstood.

<sup>4</sup>Principles, II, 284. The "inward stability of the mind's content is as characteristic of disbelief as of belief. But we shall presently see that we never disbelieve anything except for the reason that we believe something else which contradicts the first thing. Disbelief is thus an incidental complication to belief, and need not be considered by itself" (loc. cit.).

<sup>5</sup>Intelligence and curiosity, for example, are also relevant factors.

<sup>6</sup>This point raises a curious question about the existence of objects like Santa, which we shall presently take up. But perhaps we may forestall some confusion if we take into account two different meanings of "meaning": extensional ("denotative") and intensional ("connotative") meanings. "Fairy," "centaur," and "Santa," for example, each have a different meaning intensionally; but they all have the same meaning extensionally. That is, I take it, they all belong to the "null class": they do not exist extra mentum.

<sup>7</sup>Principles, II, 287-288.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., II, 289.

<sup>9</sup>Ethics, Bk. II, Prop. 41. Many editions.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., Bk. II, Prop. 35.

<sup>11</sup>That is to say, even mental images, considered by themselves, involve no error.

<sup>12</sup>Ethics, Bk. II, Prop. 49, Note.

<sup>13</sup>Principles, II, 290.

<sup>14</sup>I mean any object of belief which at a given time is not shared by the majority of members of a community but which, from the point of view of the individual who believes in that object, is taken nevertheless to be real.

<sup>15</sup>Principles, II, 291.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., II, 291.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Principles, I, 463. James seems to go too far when he says that "round square" is an absolutely definite conception which happens to stand for a thing "which nature never lets us sensibly perceive." What seems to be clear by way of conception is that the juxtaposition of "round" and "square" is meaningless, nonsense. But like nonsense verse, perhaps may give rise to some kind of experience.

<sup>18</sup>Principles, II, 291.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., II, 292-293.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 291.

<sup>21</sup>James gives us the following interesting footnote:  
 "The world of dreams is our real world whilst we are sleeping, because our attention then lapses from the sensible world. Conversely, when we wake the attention usually lapses from the dream-world and that becomes unreal. But if a dream haunts us and compels our attention during the day it is very apt to remain figuring in our consciousness as a sort of sub-universe alongside of the waking world. Most people have probably had dreams which it is hard to imagine not to have been glimpses into an actually existing region of being, perhaps a corner of the 'spiritual world.' And dreams have accordingly in all ages been regarded as revelations, and have played a large part in furnishing forth mythologies, and creating themes for faith to lay hold upon. The 'larger universe,' here, which is its immediate reductive, is the total universe, of Nature plus the Super-natural. The dream holds true, namely, in one half of that universe; the waking perceptions in the other half. Even to-day dream-objects figure among the realities in which some 'psychic-researchers' are seeking to rouse our belief. All our theories, not only those about the supernatural, but our philosophic and scientific theories as well, are like our dreams in rousing such different degrees of belief in different minds." Principles, II, 294, fn.

<sup>22</sup>We may similarly treat, for example, the Christian belief in heaven and hell. Whether or not heaven exists (and hell), is a factual question. Hence the statement "Heaven exists" is either true or false. If I believe that heaven exists, then I am by virtue of my belief making a claim that "Heaven exists" is true. But how such a claim can be verified seems to be a matter of opinion. Should I happen to believe that "Heaven exists" is true, then I ought to be prepared to act upon this belief in a characteristic way, namely, the way others would act were they also prepared to assert the same statement.

<sup>23</sup>Principles, II, 294.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., II, 294.

<sup>25</sup>Characteristically, with felicity and irony, James said: "Errors, fictions, tribal beliefs, are parts of the whole great Universe which God has made, and He must have meant all these things to be in it, each in its respective place. But for us finite creatures, 'tis to consider too curiously to consider so.'" Principles, II, 294-295.

<sup>26</sup>Principles, II, 295.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 295.

<sup>28</sup>Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 49.

<sup>29</sup>James uses the term "sting." Elsewhere, to convey a similar feeling, he frequently uses "grasps." One likes to believe that were he living today, James would use "grabs us," as well as other neo-logisms, such as "up-tight," "cool," "turned-on." Such terms express feeling-states that have hitherto remained unnamed or suppressed. One of the healthiest signs today is the recognition of the body and its feeling-states. However, we have yet to create a full-blown natural language of emotion. Until now, the activity of art has largely carried the burden of expressing emotions, which may account in part for its continued survival and recognition in an otherwise matter-of-fact world of business-like affairs.

<sup>30</sup>Principles, II, 298.

<sup>31</sup>A note of caution against possible misunderstanding: We are not suggesting a reductive form of subjectivism which ultimately leads to solipsism. On the contrary, we hope to define reality inter-subjectively. All that the above comment purports to suggest is that perhaps we are in need of a re-definition or re-evaluation of what we now commonly take to be real.

<sup>32</sup>Principles, II, 301.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., II, 306.

<sup>34</sup>Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision (1709). Many editions.

<sup>35</sup>See Pragmatism, 89-90. There James says Berkeley's criticism of "matter" was absolutely pragmatistic. Far from denying the existence of matter, Berkeley simply tells us what it consists of. It is, James continues, a true name for just so much in the way of sensation.

<sup>36</sup>Principles, II, 307.



<sup>37</sup>Letters of William James, II, 39.

<sup>38</sup>Principles, II, 308.

<sup>39</sup>James says, "In untutored minds the power to withhold action does not exist. Every exciting thought in the natural man carries credence with it. To conceive with passion is eo ipso to affirm." Principles, II, 308.

<sup>40</sup>Walter Bagehot, "The Emotion of Conviction," Literary Studies, I, 412-414. Quoted by James, Principles, II, 308. Bagehot differentiates between emotion of conviction (feeling-state) and assent (thought-state). Thus belief has a double aspect. Emotions of conviction are the stronger and so form the basis of genuine beliefs. Assent without conviction is a hollow thing. But conviction without assent is a blind and sometimes frightful thing.

<sup>41</sup>Principles, II, 308.

<sup>42</sup>Our man-on-the-street may of course deliberately tell us a falsehood. Even so, his actions may belie his words. Here, the old saw "Seeing is believing" is quite to the point. In some case, our man may not be able to express himself in any articulate way. He may not even be aware that he believes anything or is disposed toward an object in any way. However, we may still find him--and he find himself--acting in ways that are perfectly consistent with belief-statements were he to express them in words. In observing the man-on-the-street, I may come to certain conclusions as to what he may believe even though he may never say anything. He may simply show me by his behavior.

<sup>43</sup>The University Chronicle, 1 (September 1898), 287-310. Reprinted in Collected Essays and Reviews (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920).

<sup>44</sup>Ralph Barton Perry, Annotated Bibliography of the Writings of William James (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920), 37.

<sup>45</sup>Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907), 46-47.

<sup>46</sup>On this question see Maurice Baum, "The Development of James's Pragmatism Prior to 1879," Journal of Philosophy, XXX (1933), 43-51. Cf. Philip P. Wiener, Evolution and the Founders of Pragmatism, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949, chapter II. Also H. S. Thayer, Meaning and Action, Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1968. Thayer holds the view that the history of pragmatism can be thought to have its beginning jointly with the publication in 1878 of C. S. Peirce's "How To Make Our Ideas Clear" and James's

"Remarks on Spencer's Definition of Mind as Correspondence," while acknowledging that "this is not the received view, nor the one James made popular by giving the credit for inventing to Peirce." Op. cit., 144-145.

<sup>47</sup>Pragmatism, 65-66.

<sup>48</sup>Collected Essays and Reviews, 410.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 410-414.

<sup>50</sup>The pragmatic method is "The attitude of looking away from first things, principles, 'categories,' supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts." Pragmatism, 54-55.

<sup>51</sup>Pragmatism, 45.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 50.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>The Meaning of Truth: A Sequel to 'Pragmatism.' New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909, v.

<sup>55</sup>Pragmatism, 213.

<sup>56</sup>The Meaning of Truth, 218.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., v-vii.

<sup>58</sup>See Bertrand Russell, "Transatlantic 'Truth,'" Albany Review (January), 1908. Reprinted in Philosophical Essays (New York: Simon and Shuster, A Clarion Book, 1968), Chapter V, "William James's Conception of Truth." John Dewey's papers are an important corrective. See, for example, "The Development of American Pragmatism," in his Philosophy and Civilization (New York: Minton, Balch and Co., 1931); also "What Pragmatism Means by Practical," Essays in Experimental Logic (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1916). Also Peirce's theory of meaning in various papers of Volume V, Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, ed. C. Hartshorne, P. Weiss, and A. W. Burks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931-1958).

<sup>59</sup>The Meaning of Truth, 218.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 218. See H. S. Thayer, Meaning and Action, 148-153.

<sup>61</sup>The Meaning of Truth, 218.

<sup>62</sup>See James's Some Problems of Philosophy (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911), Appendix, "Faith and the Right to Believe."

<sup>63</sup>The Will to Believe (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1897), 2-3.

<sup>64</sup>Peirce defines "belief" as a deliberate habit of action, a readiness to act in a certain way under given conditions when actuated by a given motive. Hence, "belief" and "habit" are treated as synonyms. In short, Peirce speaks of belief-habits (Collected Papers, V., 510, 516, 523). As a readiness to act in a deliberate way under given conditions, belief-habits can be construed dispositionally. In this sense, for example, we may say that "Jones believes that p" means that Jones behaves or would behave in a certain way if or when motivated by given conditions. It is not necessary that Jones do anything when he says "I believe that p," it is sufficient only that he would be prepared to act on p in a deliberate way should it be the case that he were to do something.

For Peirce, belief-habits are not unconscious patterns of behavior. On the contrary, he says, "if we do not know that we believe, then, from the nature of the case, we do not believe" (op. cit., V., 239). To be more precise, a habit for Peirce is a rule of action and not an action as such. In this sense, a habit is a generalized form of behavior which is manifested on a particular occasion with reference to a particular object or situation, or, in Peirce's words, "to whatever there be of a certain description" (loc. cit., 428).

<sup>65</sup>That Kant's dicta figure here can be seen in the following remark by Peirce: "What is the proof that the possible practical consequences of a concept constitute the sum total of that concept? The argument upon which I rested the maxim in my original paper was that belief consists mainly in being deliberately prepared to adopt the formula believed in as a guide to action. If this be in truth the nature of belief, then undoubtedly the proposition believed in can itself be nothing but a maxim of conduct" (Collected Papers, V., 27).

<sup>66</sup>Wright's influence was pervasive and not soon to be forgotten. In Brazil, suffering mostly from boredom, James wrote, "Would I might hear Chauncey Wright philosophize for one evening." He often prefaced his remarks by the phrase, "as Chauncey Wright used to say." James looked upon Wright as an authoritative exponent of science and admired his boldness of ideas as well as his intellectual parsimony when describing facts. Years later, James remembered him as his tough-minded old friend who used to say that "behind the bare phenomenal facts . . . there is nothing." In endeavoring to point to Wright's influence on James, we must not overestimate it. It is what it is: an important factor in the

development of James's thought. But there were negative influences as well which caused a breach in intellectual peace between them. Ultimately, Wright and James became philosophical adversaries. For the source of the above quotations, as well as the substance of these remarks, see Ralph Barton Perry's superlative work, The Thought and Character of William James, Briefer Version (New York: George Braziller, 1954), 127-129. See William James's (unsigned) memorial tribute, "Chauncey Wright," Nation, XXI (1875), 194; reprinted in James's posthumous Collected Essays and Reviews (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920), 20-25. James also acknowledged Wright's "intellectual companionship in old times" in the Preface of his Principles of Psychology, I, vii. Cf. Edward H. Madden, Chauncey Wright (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1964), 126-130. For a sympathetic and insightful account of Wright's work and place in American philosophy, see also Madden's Chauncey Wright and the Foundations of Pragmatism (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963).

<sup>67</sup>In a letter to Peirce, James wrote the following: "I am a-logical, if not illogical, and glad to be so when I find Bertie Russell trying to excogitate what true knowledge means, in the absence of any concrete universe surrounding the knower and the known. Ass!" Quoted in Perry's Thought and Character of William James, 368.

<sup>68</sup>Collected Papers, VI., 183.

<sup>69</sup>Until recently, the stature of Peirce as a philosopher was virtually unrecognized. (The publication of his Collected Papers has been an important step in helping bring his ideas to a world audience.) Hence, any appreciation of James by Peirce fell upon deaf ears. One of the facts which testify to James's awareness of philosophical problems, was his early recognition of the significance of Peirce's logico-mathematical works, which place Peirce in the front ranks of pioneers in this field.

## CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup>Strictly speaking, "aesthetics" (aisthētikos) has to do with perception, especially by feeling. However, as the term has been more commonly used, it refers to that branch of philosophy dealing with theories of beauty or art. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten is given credit as the official founder of aesthetics as a separate discipline in 1750. Today, as used by The American Society for Aesthetics, the term "aesthetics" is understood to include "all studies of the arts and related types of experience from a philosophic, scientific, or other theoretical standpoint, including those of psychology, sociology, anthropology, cultural history, art criticism, and education." See the inside front cover of any recent issue of The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism.

<sup>2</sup>New York: Kinton, Balch and Company, 1934. See especially Chapter III, "Having an Experience." The similarity between James and Dewey here is remarkable.

<sup>3</sup>Letter to H. G. Wells, Sept. 11, 1906, Letters of William James, ed. Henry James, 2 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1926), II, 260.

<sup>4</sup>The Next Development in Man (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1948), 23, 48, 62-66, and elsewhere.

<sup>5</sup>In the literature of philosophy, religion, and politics, Plato's, St. Augustine's, and Thomas More's have envisioned perfect Republics, Cities of God, and Utopias. Whatever other realm Plato may have had in mind, his perfect state was not, however, of this world; nor was Augustine's City of God a concrete reality; nor was More's Utopia yet any closer, for literally it means "No-where." And yet, these philosophers, and others, did not expend their talents and energies for nothing. We do not venerate them, nor eulogize their works just because we learn that what they wrote are "classics." On the contrary, these men are great because serious men study and wear out the pages of their texts seeking in seriousness and reverence the wisdom of these prophets and sages. In a sense we interpret their dreams; but neither our interpretations nor their dreams are

merely hypothetical, speculative, or sheer fancy. Just because Plato's ideal state was an ideal it was, for him, most real; because Christians like Augustine viewed this world only as something to be endured, the idea of an eternal heavenly city was a dream devoutly to be wished; and because More's England both politically and spiritually was shaken in the wake of the Reformation, he sought security in his Utopia. But these men were not psychotic. They were intoxicated, if you will, with grand visions, insights, and inspirations. It is not for nothing, then, that we call Plato a poet; for he, like others, possessed vision and a sense of creativity. They were artists as well as philosophers. I hope to make this point clearer below, where we shall discuss the nature of the poet's vision or insight (theōria).

It is commonly held that Plato, an "idealist," and Aristotle, a "naturalist," were worlds apart, so to speak, in their respective philosophies. It is hard for me to believe, however, that they were not writing about the same world, but only differently. Plato wrote "poetically" and Aristotle wrote "scientifically." Too often poet-philosophers, together with myth-makers, are accused of writing bad science; and too often naturalists or materialists, or whatever else one may call them, are accused of being crass and irreligious. We often condemn these writers because we usually judge from some point of view too bigoted, narrow, or misinformed. We fail to understand the language of whatever is being expressed. We fail to understand what is its beauty or its meaning. We fail to realize its impetuosity, or mistake its power. And so we disagree, or miss the point altogether.

<sup>6</sup>Art and Anarchy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), 3.

<sup>7</sup>Irwin Edman, et al., Art (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1964), 33.

<sup>8</sup>Edgar Wind, op. cit., 13.

<sup>9</sup>See, for example, Benedette Croce's article "Aesthetics," in the Encyclopaedia Britannica (Fourteenth Edition).

<sup>10</sup>Talks to Teachers on Psychology: and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1899), 29.

<sup>11</sup>See Dewey, op. cit., Chapter III.

<sup>12</sup>Speaking of the "paradisiacal" life at Chautauqua, this is what James said:  
I went in curiosity for a day. I stayed for a week, held spellbound by the charm and ease of everything, by the

middle-class paradise, without a sin, without a victim, without a blot, without a tear.

And yet what was my own astonishment, on emerging into the dark and wicked world again, to catch myself quite unexpectedly and involuntarily saying: "Ouf! what a relief! Now for something primordial and savage, even though it were as bad as an Armenian massacre, to set the balance straight again. This order is too tame, this culture too second-rate, this goodness too uninspiring. This human drama without a villain or a pang; this community so refined that ice-cream soda-water is the utmost offering it can make to the brute animal in man; this city simmering in the tepid lakeside sun; this atrocious harmlessness of all things,--I cannot abide with them. Let me take my chances again in the big outside worldly wilderness with all its sins and sufferings. There are the heights and depths, the precipices and the steep ideals, the gleams of the awful and the infinite; and there is more hope and help a thousand times than in this dead level and quintessence of every mediocrity. Talks to Teachers, 270-271.

<sup>13</sup>Essay on Utilitarianism. Many editions.

<sup>14</sup>R. G. Collingwood writes: "Man, who desires to know everything, desires to know himself. . . . Without some knowledge of himself, his knowledge of other things is imperfect: for to know something without knowing that one knows it is only a half-knowing, and to know that one knows is to know oneself. Self-knowledge is desirable and important to man, not only for its own sake, but as a condition without which no other knowledge can be critically justified and securely based." The Idea of History (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1946), 205.

<sup>15</sup>William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lyrical Ballads, ed. by R. L. Brett and A. R. Jones (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1965), 266.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 266.

<sup>17</sup>S. H. Butcher, Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art, 4th ed. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1907), 35.

<sup>18</sup>Speaking of his reaction after having read Tolstoi's War and Peace and Anna Karenina, James wrote that now "I feel as if I knew perfection in the representation of human life. Life indeed seems less real than his tale of it. Such infallible veracity! The impression haunts me as nothing literary ever haunted me before." Letters of William James, II, 48.

<sup>19</sup>See, for example, J. S. Mill's On Liberty (many editions). There Mill argued that individual liberty was

necessary to the realization of personal happiness and the good of society. Moreover, he argued for the unrestricted flow of ideas as a means for discovering truth. An individual's liberty was governed by the principle that one could do as he wished so long as his actions did not interfere with the liberty of others to also so act.

<sup>20</sup>Such a scene was vividly recalled by E. W. Emerson after a visit in 1860 or 1861:

"The adipose and affectionate Wilkie," as his father called him, would say something and be instantly corrected or disputed by the little cock-sparrow Bob, the youngest, but good-naturedly defend his statement, and then, Henry (Junior) would emerge from his silence in defence of Wilkie. Then Bob would be more impertinently insistent, and Mr. James would advance as moderator, and William, the eldest, join in. The voice of the moderator presently would be drowned by the combatants and he soon came down vigorously into the arena, and when, in the excited argument, the dinner knives might not be absent from eagerly gesticulating hands, dear Mrs. James, more conventional, but bright as well as motherly, would look at me, laughingly reassuring, saying, "Don't be disturbed, Edward; they won't stab each other. This is usual when the boys come home." Quoted in R. B. Perry's The Thought and Character of William James, Briefer Version (New York: George Braziller, 1954), 43.

<sup>21</sup>"William James's Philosophy of Higher Education," School and Society, 39 (February 1934), 166.

<sup>22</sup>Unless, of course, we wish to include all those who call themselves "pragmatists"; but that is too vague a classification. Dewey, for example, while a pragmatist in the broader sense, chose to label his particular form of it "instrumentalism."

<sup>23</sup>"William James," in Classic American Philosophers, ed. Max H. Fisch (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951), 124-125.

## CHAPTER V

<sup>1</sup>New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1899; reprinted with Introduction by Paul Woodring (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1958).

<sup>2</sup>Teacher in America (Garden City, N. Y.: A Doubleday Anchor Book, 1954), 279.

<sup>3</sup>New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1911.

<sup>4</sup>Talks to Teachers, 29.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 33. James's emphasis.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 33. James's emphasis.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., iv.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 35-36.

<sup>13</sup>Principles, I, 113.

<sup>14</sup>Metaphysics, Book A, line one.

<sup>15</sup>Principles, I, 105.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., I, 104.

<sup>17</sup>Talks to Teachers, 66.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 66-67.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 67-76.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 77-78.

<sup>21</sup>Principles, I, 121.

<sup>22</sup>Ethics, Book III, Proposition VI.

<sup>23</sup>Talks to Teachers, 92.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 93.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 94.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 98.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 38.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 49.

<sup>29</sup>See his Emile (1762).

<sup>30</sup>Talks to Teachers, 70.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 55.

<sup>32</sup>See, for example, John Dewey, Experience and Education (New York: Macmillan Company, 1938); William Kilpatrick, Remaking the Curriculum (New York: Newson and Company, 1936); John Childs, Education and Morals (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950); Harold Rugg, American Life and the Curriculum (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1936), and Foundations of American Education (Yonkers-on-Hudson, N. Y.: World Book Company, 1947).

<sup>33</sup>To take but one example: Rugg has written that "educational workers could build their practical programs in the twentieth century on the principle that meaning arises out of the active experience of the individual and that experience is a continuous stream of minute, complicated, integrated responses. Learning is making responses. We respond actively, with meaning; we do not passively "acquire" meanings, by some mysterious process, from the environment about us. We have a meaningful experience only when the organism makes an appropriate reaction. The educator can bank on this, then--the learning child is the active child." American Life and the Curriculum, 231.

<sup>34</sup>James R. Angell, Psychology (New York: Henry Holt, 1904). Like W. James, Angell said that he "began to receive requests from teachers to prepare a briefer volume on the same general lines as his Psychology, 1904." An Introduction to Psychology (New York: Henry Holt, 1918).

<sup>35</sup>Edward L. Thorndike, The Elements of Psychology (New York: A. G. Seiler, 1907). Introduction by James.

<sup>36</sup>Josiah Royce, Outline of Psychology (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908).

<sup>37</sup>Robert S. Woodworth, Psychology: A Study of Mental Life (New York: Henry Holt, 1921). Notice the emphasis on "Mental Life," which is Jamesian.

<sup>38</sup>Carl E. Seashore, Introduction to Psychology (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923). Dedicated to James.

<sup>39</sup>William McDougall, Outline of Psychology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923). Dedicated "To the Honored Memory of William James, Great Philosopher, Great Psychologist, and Great Man."

<sup>40</sup>New York: Harper and Brothers, Torchbook edition, xiii.

<sup>41</sup>Talks to Teachers, 266-267.

<sup>42</sup>Memories and Studies (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1911), 309.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 314.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 314-315.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 353.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 353-354.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 362.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 363.

<sup>49</sup>"Stanford's Ideal Destiny," Memories and Studies, 356-367.

<sup>50</sup>"William James," The Psychological Review, 18 (1911), 81.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 82.

<sup>52</sup>Gilbert Highet, The Art of Teaching (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 207.

<sup>53</sup>Teacher in America, 172-173.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 173.

<sup>55</sup>Nation, 23 (September 1876), 178-179.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 178-179.

<sup>57</sup>"Cicero: Education for Humanitas," Harvard Educational Review, 35 (Summer 1965), 362.

<sup>58</sup>See, for example, the following: Roswell P. Angier, "Another Student's Impressions of James at the Turn of the Century," Psychological Review, 50 (1943), 132-134; Frederick E. Bolton, "Great Contributors to Education: William James," Progressive Education, (March 1930), 82-88; Edmund B. Delabarre, "A Student's Impression of James in the Late '80's," Psychological Review, 50 (1943), 125-127; Dickinson S. Miller, "Beloved Psychologist: William James," Great Teachers, ed. H. Peterson (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1946); Charles L. Odom, "William James, Great Teacher," The Educational Forum, VIII (1943-44), 63-68.

<sup>59</sup>"The Philosophy of William James," Philosophical Review, 20 (1911), 1-29; reprinted in Perry's Present Philosophical Tendencies (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1955), 378.

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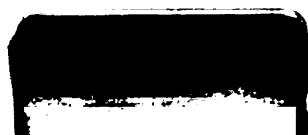
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