Streams of William James

The Newsletter of William James Society
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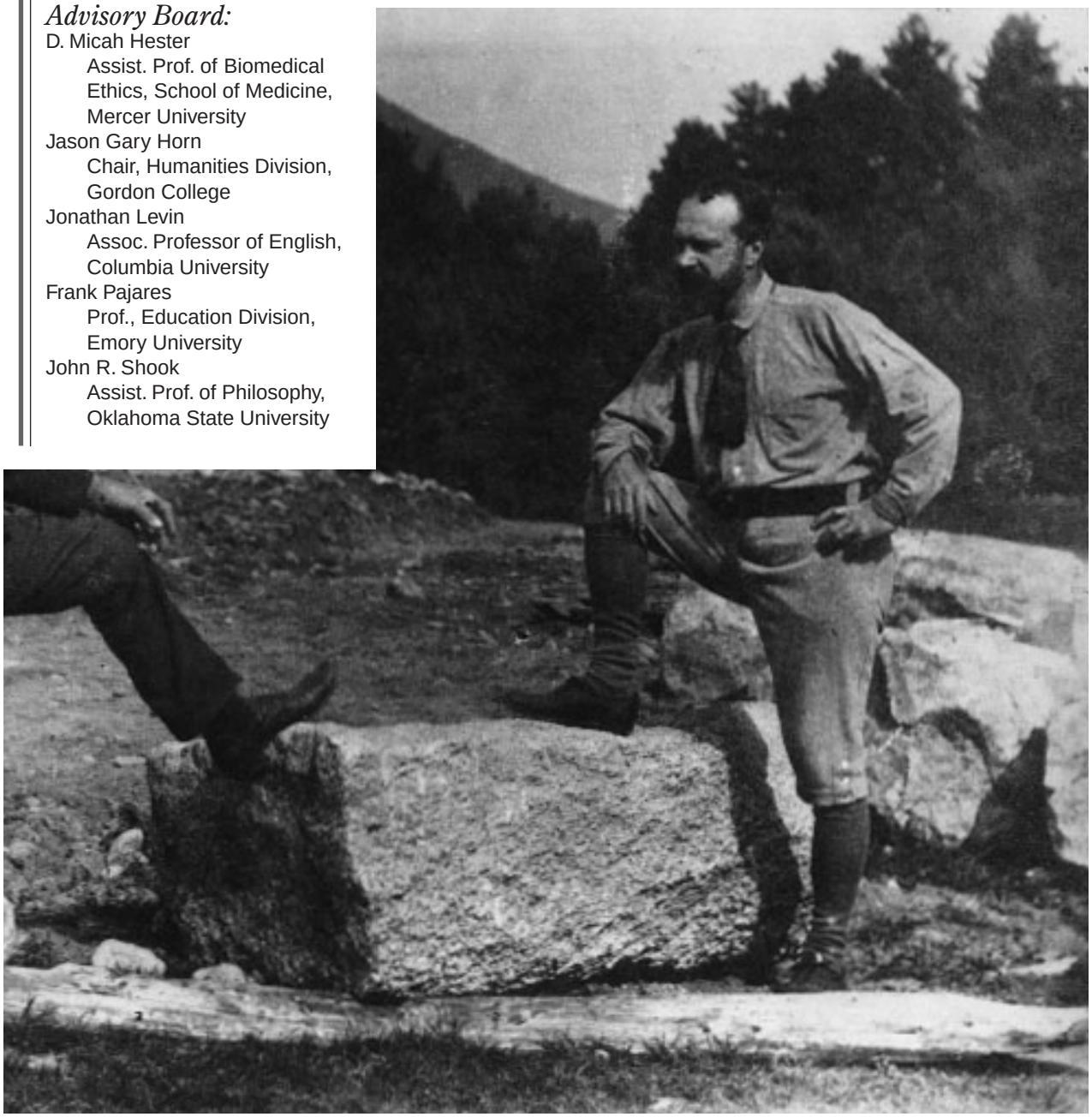

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WJ in Books

by Randall Albright

Nicholas Rescher's *Complexity* (1998), Donald B. Calne's *Within Reason* (1999), and Hilary Putnam's *The Threefold Cord* (2000) have favorable mentions of William's work.

In The Theater of Consciousness, The Workspace of the Mind by Bernard J. Baars (1997) also mentions William's work favorably. Baars notes: "Remarkably, the best source on the psychology of consciousness is still William James's elegant *Principles of Psychology*, first published in 1890, but never out of print" (p. 35). The color illustration in the beginning of the book shows an interesting brain scan difference between a "naive" user of the Tetris computer game and one who has made it a habit.

In his best-selling book, *The Seat of the Soul* (1990), Gary Zukav notes that William James was one of the people who had inspired him, calling him a "mystic," in relation to an earlier book which he co-wrote, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics* (1979). Two others that Zukav mentions as inspiration also appreciated WJ: Carl Jung and Niels Bohr.

Laura Roper wrote that an episode in Frederick Law Olmsted's early life "so interested William James that Olmsted wrote a full account of it for him" "forty-seven years later" (p. 34) in *FLO, A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1973). Extant letters between WJ and Olmsted in July-August 1891 on this matter are summarized on p. 583 of *The Correspondence of William James, Volume 7* (UP of Virginia, 1999). Olmsted wrote 10 pages for WJ on "open-eyed sleep-visions."

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Borges and WJ Revisited

by Matthew Stephens

Jaime Nubiola suggested in a past issue of this newsletter (Vol. 1, no. 3, Winter 2000) that Jorge Luis Borges's appreciation of William James might be worth exploring. In that I concur, and I'd like to add some detail, though I would also like to disagree with Nubiola's conclusion that paints James as the metaphysical optimist and Borges the pessimist. Things are more complicated than that, I suspect, but first there are some interesting details to relate.

Borges, in point of fact, learned to read English (the first language he did read) and think philosophically in a household where James's *Psychology: The Briefer Course* was venerated. Jorge Borges, Sr., taught his son metaphysics from age ten, and taught a course in psychology using the *Briefer Course* as his text. Moreover, in the year of his death—1986—Borges dictated a short piece on *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and its author, part of a series of essays entitled "My Personal Library". The piece Borges in his maturity called his "first fully realized essay" is thoroughly Jamesian in spirit. I think this lends a nice bit of counterpoint to our knowledge of Borges's affection for James: it was both a beginning and an ending for the textual Borges whom we read. He had high praise for the *Varieties*, and for the author, whose prose style he admired. Apart from the aforementioned, and *Pragmatism*, a quick glance at a recent collection of Borges' work shows a familiarity with *The Will to Believe* and *Some Problems of Philosophy*. (An interesting historical aside comes from Borges's early adulthood. In the 1920s, when Borges was finding himself as a writer, he had a close literary and philosophical friendship with the Argentine poet Macedonio Fernández, who at one time corresponded with WJ.)

Borges had more than a nodding acquaintance with philosophy. He read Royce and Russell, Bergson and Whitehead, (and this list does not begin to reflect the awesome range of his reading) and claimed that his father taught him the basics of Berkeley's idealism ("An Autobiographical Essay" [1970] in *El Aleph and Other Stories*). Borges singled out Schopenhauer as the philosopher dearest to his heart, and this might account for the pessimism some see in Borges's work. But there is more to it than that. One might say that James and Borges saw the same aspect of the universe—its increasing variety—and took from it two feelings. Respectively, those feelings are joy and a sense of mystery.

Reading Borges, one notes that James does get occasional mention in his non-fiction (see especially "From Allegories to Novels", which recycles elements from the preface Nubiola cited. Cf. "Immortality", where Borges explicitly examines James's views), but more interesting are the places where his influence is less obvious. In "A New Refutation of Time," Borges takes up the torch of British Empiricism, deciding that Locke, Berkeley, and Hume weren't radical enough, as they took for granted the existence of the plenum of time. In fact, both Borges and James appeal to Berkeley's metaphysical parsimony in justifying their denials, James for his rejection of a mental substance, Borges for a continuum we call 'time'.

Borges extends classical empiricism by applying its tools to our beliefs about the reality of time, much in the same way that James's radical empiricism exploded ideas about 'mind-dust' and a discrete self existing prior to experience. And as James turned epistemology and metaphysics into a study of the many relations between things, Borges turned his writing into a self-conscious tissue of relations, playing fact against fantasy, mask against the image of himself he saw in his mirror. One could argue that Borges's literary style is built on, or presupposes, a foundation of Jamesian empiricism. Also, looking at James's essays from a stylistic viewpoint, the two I find to exemplify James at his best (and to betray my bias, at his most economical) are "Does Consciousness Exist?" and "A World of Pure Experience"—two essays which approach the literary style epitomized by Borges.

In a youthful essay, entitled "The Nothingness of Personality", Borges elucidates his view of personal identity, a thought that would intertwine with many of his later self-conscious, literature-conscious writings. His polemical stance is strikingly reminiscent of "Does Consciousness Exist?" Borges's essay begins thusly:

> "I want to tear down the exceptional preeminence now generally awarded to the self, and I pledge to be spurred on by concrete certainty, and not the caprice of an ideological ambush or a dazzling intellectual prank" [1924] (Borges, *Selected Non-fictions*, ed. Eliot Weinberger, trans. Esther Allen, Viking, 1999, p. 3)

Much as James attacked the idea of a *cogito* in his essay, Borges declared the belief in an inner personality underwriting one's doings to be "without metaphysical foundation or visceral reality" (Ibid.) It is fascinating to note Borges's equating the existence of a sense of personality with 'a few muscular sensations'—a stunning parallel to WJ's passage in *Principles* that the sense of self consists mainly of a collection of 'peculiar motions in the head or between the head and throat' (from "The Consciousness of Self" chapter, p. 288, 1983 Harvard UP edition). Borges's reflections bear even closer resemblance to the chapter "The Self" in the *Briefer Course*. The biographical implications of this philosophical view again bring similarities to light. If there is no 'self of selves', we must craft our own personality as we

go, through our words and deeds. This idea connects James's philosophy of mind with his own "Will To Believe" doctrine, and with Borges's practice of continual and varied self-creation through his writing.

Borges also invites his readers to follow this train of thought for themselves, a very Jamesian offer. Thus Borges writes:

> There is no whole self. Any one of life's present situations is seamless and sufficient. Are you, as you ponder these disquietudes, anything more than an indifference gliding over the argument I make, and an appraisal of the opinions I expound? ("The Nothingness of Personality", p. 3)

This is Borges's version of James's "The passing thought is the only thinker which psychology requires" in the *Principles* (1983 Harvard UP edition, p. 10), with a nod to Schopenhauer, and perhaps Nietzsche.

James responded to this existential challenge and conquered depression in part through an effort of will, but also in part by devoting much of his energy to teaching and helping others. We should not forget that WJ purposefully presented a cheerful face to the world of his readers, as Borges crafted his labyrinthine pessimism as part of that creation he called "the other one, the one called Borges" ("Borges and I" [1956], *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*, p. 246. (2nd ed., 1964)) Looking at their biographies, one would think James's life (at times) the darker, and his character the more pessimistic. We neglect James's black periods, in part because they do not appear in his manner of literary expression, except as a catalyst for his optimism. Borges's optimism is better glanced through his taste in books. A quick glance at any of the biographies written about these two fascinating writers shows the extent to which their personal libraries overlap. They both counted Kipling, Dickens, Whitman, Dante, and Robert Louis Stevenson as among their favourite writers. Fond of affinities and revelling even more in differences, both men would have enjoyed a conversation about their favourite books.

From our point of view, as devotees of the writings they have left behind, WJ and Borges both seem to exist through their writings. We can in effect see their humanity, their personality, in their prose, and I think it this feature of their writing derives in no small part from their views on the self, its ideas, and the written word.

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Ludwig Wittgenstein and WJ

by Jaime Nubiola

The relationship between William James and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) has recently been the subject of intense scholarly research. We know for instance that the later Wittgenstein's reflections on the philosophy of psychology found in James a major source of inspiration. Not surprisingly therefore, the pragmatist nature of the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein is increasingly acknowledged, in spite of Wittgenstein's adamant refusal of being labeled a "pragmatist". In this brief paper I merely want to piece together some of the available evidence of Wittgenstein's high regard for William James, not only for his thoughts, but even more so for his character.

The first reference to James in Wittgenstein's papers is found in a letter of June 22, 1912, to Bertrand Russell. In that letter, written in Cambridge (England), after reporting to Russell the discussion he had with the psychologist Charles S. Myers about the relations between logic and psychology, Wittgenstein adds that, whenever he has the time, he reads James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience.* Moreover, he offers the following comment: "This book does me *a lot* of good. I don't mean to say that I will be a saint soon, but I am not sure that it does not improve me a little in a way in which I would like to improve *very much*: namely I think that it helps me to get rid of the *Sorge* (in the sense in which Goethe used the word in the 2nd part of Faust)."[1] McGuinness suggests that the young Wittgenstein may have recognized his own condition in the description of "*The Sick Soul*" which William James gives in the sixth and seventh lectures of that book[2]. Those memorable Jamesian pages may have been experienced by Wittgenstein as an explanation of, as well as a relief from his permanent dissatisfaction with, his work and his compulsive need to both give and receive affection. His student O'C. Drury—who was urged by Wittgenstein to abandon philosophy and to go into medicine—remembers that Wittgenstein suggested to him in 1930 to read James's book[3]. Moreover—as Haack notes[4]—Wittgenstein must have felt sympathetic to *The Varieties of Religious Experience* for James's rejection of the idea of an essence of 'religion' and to the suggestion that diverse religious experiences may have certain "family resemblances".

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1. G. H. von Wright, ed., *Letters to Russell, Keynes and Moore*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1974, 10.
2. B. McGuinness, *Wittgenstein: A Life. Young Ludwig 1889-1921*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1988, 156.
3. M. O'C. Drury, "Conversations with Wittgenstein", in R. Rhees, ed., *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Personal Recollections*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1981, 121.

We also know that, at some time of the second period of Wittgenstein's stay in Cambridge during the thirties, James's *The Principles of Psychology* was—as one of his former pupils A. C. Jackson told John Passmore[5]— the only philosophical work that was to be seen on his bookshelves. According to Elizabeth Anscombe, Wittgenstein read the abridged version of James, entitled *Psychology: The Briefer Course*, which was familiarly known amongst the students as the "*Jimmy*" to distinguish it from the heavy two volume edition.[6] In fact, William James is already mentioned in the second page of the *Brown Book*, the lectures of the 1934-35 course, when Wittgenstein refers to James's thesis regarding the specific feelings accompanying the use of words such as 'and', 'if', and 'or', and again in the pages where Wittgenstein echoes James's well known position that "a man doesn't cry because he is sad but that he is sad because he cries"[7].

In *Philosophical Investigations* James is quoted four times (as many as Frege), and *The Principles of Psychology* is alluded to more frequently than any other text in the entire course of the book. Peter Geach and his collaborators identified more than thirty passages of *The Principles* which have a parallel in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* and in *Zettel*[8]. Also, a great number of Wittgenstein's notes in his manuscripts 130-138 are related to James, although —as Schulte notices[9]— its real Jamesian source is not always evident. In the roughly 120 notebook pages written from May through September of 1946, Wittgenstein argues with James intermittently but consistently, and such persistent interest for another author is absolutely exceptional in Wittgenstein[10]. According to Monk, Wittgenstein had even thought of using *The Principles* as a course text in order to illustrate the conceptual confusions that he was trying to fight, but in the end —as he told Rhees— he preferred to talk just from his own head[11]. In short, during his last years of his life Wittgenstein very often referred to James in his lectures[12], and—to everybody's astonishment—on one occasion he even referred to an exact page number![13]

Perhaps the distance between Wittgenstein and pragmatism may be understood in terms of James's view of the two different traditions of doing philosophy, which he expressed in his well known distinction between two types of mental make-up, the *tough-minded*, characterized by its empiricism of facts, and the *tender-minded*, defined by some intellectual going by principles. James's point is that his new pragmatism provides a middle way which enables one to overcome the shortcomings typical of these two make-ups[14]. In some sense, the later Wittgenstein also tried to overcome the shortcomings of these two alternatives. He certainly considered his *Tractatus* as an example of a miscarriage of the dogmatic tough-minded make-up, and, as a result, he maybe came closer to the tender-minded one. No doubt, the difference of temperaments between James and Wittgenstein is great; but Wittgenstein's affective acknowledgement of James's relevance makes it possible to detect some real affective community between them. As Goodman rightly observes, Wittgenstein treats William James as a wise master, although sometimes as a miscarried one[15].

Wittgenstein was also fond of the powerful narrative style of William James, but above all he admired James as a person. His admiration was not confined to the recognition of James's authority in psychology, but above all he saw in James the good person that he would like to have been. This is borne out by the comment which he made to Drury: "That is what makes him [James] a good philosopher; he was a real human being"[16]. That, to use Hilary Putnam's[17] words, the deepest philosopher of the twentieth century had such high regard for William James, may be seen as an invitation to read James again, and to discover the real person he was.

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4. R. Haack, "Wittgenstein's Pragmatism", *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 1982 (19), 163. James fully anticipated Wittgenstein's attack to essentialism: G. Pitcher, *The Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1964, 218-219; G. P. Baker y P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein. Understanding and Meaning*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1980, 324.
5. J. Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, Macmillan, New York, 1957, 428, n. 2.
6. Personal communication to Robin Haack, "Wittgenstein's Pragmatism", 163, n.1.
7. L. Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1960, §1 y §48.
8. C. Cope et al, *A Wittgenstein Workbook*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1967, 48.
9. J. Schulte, *Experience and Expression. Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1993, 9.
10. S. S. Hilly, *The Later Wittgenstein*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1987, 207 and n. 477.
11. R. Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein. The Duty of Genius*, Vintage, London, 1990, 477.
12. According to the notes of the students P. T. Geach, K. J. Shah and A. C. Jackson, this is true also for the last course he gave: *Wittgenstein's Lectures on Philosophical Psychology 1946-47*, P. T. Geach, ed., Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York, 1988.
13. J. Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, 428, n. 2.
14. W. James, *Pragmatism*, in *The Works of William James*, F. H. Burkhardt, ed., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1975, I, 13; see also N. Rescher, *Baffling Phenomena*, Rowman, Savage, MD, 1991, 103-104.
15. R. Goodman, "Experience, Meaning, Pragmatism: James and Wittgenstein", (unpublished) 3; Abstract in *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 1993 (67), 89, 3; see also R. Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein. The Duty of Genius*, 478.
16. M. O'C. Drury, "Conversations with Wittgenstein", 121.
17. H. Putnam, *Realism with a Human Face, Philosophical Papers III*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, xxxiv.

Ludwig Wittgenstein and WJ by Jaime Nubiola

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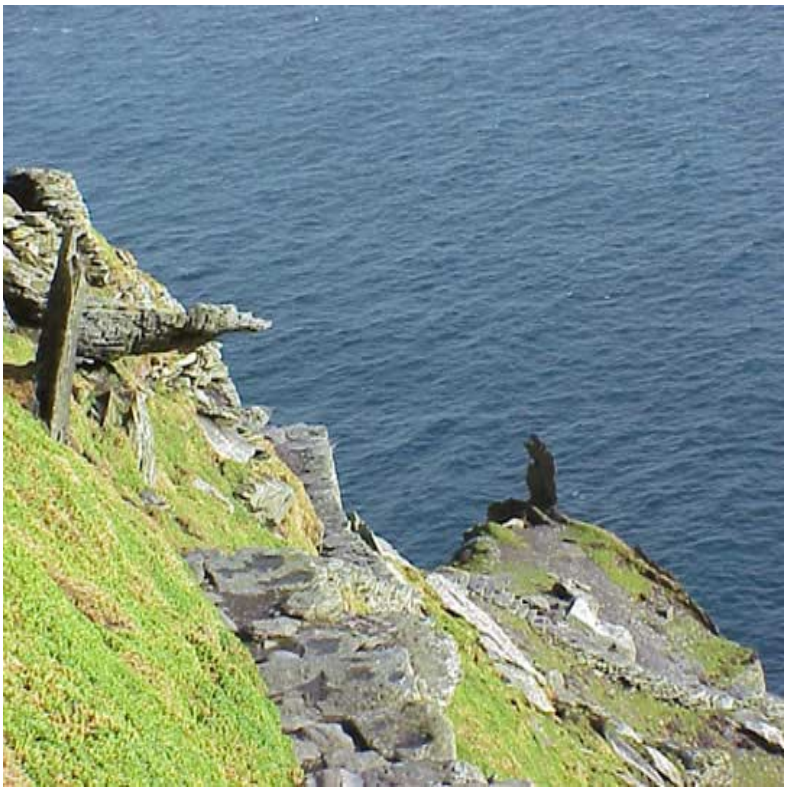

Cliffhanger

by Bay James (1999)

"...a federal republic..."

by William James

Pragmatically interpreted, pluralism or the doctrine that it is many means only that the sundry parts of reality may be externally related. Everything you can think of, however vast or inclusive, has on the pluralistic view a genuinely 'external' environment of some sort or amount. Things are "with" one another in many ways, but nothing includes everything, or dominates over everything. The word 'and' trails along after every sentence. Something always escapes. 'Ever not quite' has to be said of the best attempts made anywhere in the universe at attaining all-inclusiveness. The pluralistic world is thus more like a federal republic than like an empire or a kingdom. However much may be collected, however much may report itself as present at any effective centre of consciousness or action, something else is self-governed and absent and unreduced to unity.

—p. 321-2, "Conclusions", *A Pluralistic Universe*
(Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909)

95 Irving Street Update

The last written update which we have seen on the state of William James's house, first discussed in Vol. 1, No. 1, of this newsletter, is a Boston Globe article written by Alex Beam, which appeared on page 1, Section D, of February 18, 2000. The title of the article was: "William James lived here—and it's going condo." In that article, Beam reported that, although Harvard had an option to buy the property, they chose not to exercise it, despite letters of concern including University of California at Berkeley psychology professor William Runyan.

Interestingly, in contacting Mr. Beam for further investigation, a William James Society member was led to understand that Harvard *had* owned the house when the first non-James family owner sold it, assuming that it would be safe for posterity in their hands.

The most recent news we have of the house comes forwarded by an anonymous William James Society member from the John Dewey List Serve, which said that a single owner had bought the property as one house for roughly $4.5 million and intended to keep it as such.

Please keep us informed of developments related to this historic site.

First Libraries

Streams of William James is now available at the following:

- Harvard University's Widener Library; and
- Brown University's Rockefeller Library.

William James and John Dewey: A Common Vision

by John R. Shook

Note: Some material for this paper is drawn from introductions written for the volumes of *The Chicago School of Functionalism* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2001). A second paper, "William James and John Dewey: A Contentious Partnership," is forthcoming in *Streams of William James.*

Philosophy in the 1880s and 1890s was energized by erupting controversies that would presently be characterized as issues in "philosophy of mind" or "philosophical psychology." Responsibility for such an explosion of intense creativity and debate rests primarily on two profound developments: the rising acceptance of Darwinian evolution and the expanding interest in psychological experimentation. They encouraged the revolutionary notion that human beings must be studied as physical organisms operating to survive in a natural environment. William James of Harvard University and the University of Chicago functionalists, led by John Dewey, were philosophers and psychologists who explored the emerging frontiers of philosophy of mind. They established a novel approach to the understanding of human cognition and behavior. This approach was broadly naturalistic, in sharp contrast to the many flourishing idealisms of that time.

The Origins of Functionalism

Functionalism is primarily defined by its thesis that psychology is the study of mental life as an adaptive organic process. James and Dewey adopted a naturalistic attitude towards the human being and its abilities. Materialism itself was hardly a new philosophy. However, materialism up to that time had little to say about the human intellectual abilities, after reducing them to workings of a bodily machine or relegating them to epiphenomenal by-products of the brain's activity. The largest contribution of materialism to modern philosophy of mind rested on its mechanistic theory of the origin of ideas. Materialism usually supported sensationalistic empiricism by locating the source of information about the world exclusively in the mechanical activities of the sense organs, stimulated in turn by the transmission of motion from forceful contact with physical bodies in nature. Information about the surrounding environment is generated by the correct kind of interaction between the natural word and the natural workings of the brain. Aside from possessing a properly working nervous system, the perceptive observer is treated as a passive receptacle of this information for which the observer deserves no responsibility or credit. Sensationalistic empiricism permits the rational manipulation of information into more complex combinations of association. But aside from the use of standard logical tools, any deviant manipulation or creation of ideas can only result in the serious risk of deception, illusion, and error.

Materialism and sensationalism prevailed over German idealisms and lingering dualisms, standing victorious across Europe from Scotland to Austria during the middle decades of the 19th Century. But despite the obvious affinities between materialism, evolution, and psychological experimentation, their combination in the 1870s slowly eroded sensationalism's dominance. This erosion was accelerated by suddenly renascent post-Kantian idealisms which exposed the many inconsistencies and paradoxes of any empiricism which claims that knowledge of the natural world of physical objects and their lawful behavior is "built up" solely out of raw sensory materials possessing neither coherence nor meaning. Sensationalism's denial that the mind's knowing faculties help to construct the basic experiential information was opposed by idealism's counter-claim that without such constructive assistance no genuine experience of the world could occur. Evolution's perspective on the physiological role of the nervous system, and psychological experimentation on actual mental processes, decisively tipped the scales against sensationalism. Together they established that the human observer selected, filtered, and shaped experiences of the world.

This revolution replaced the passivism required by sensationalism with the activism taught by what can be termed "voluntarism." Voluntarism emphasized the role of the will in directing all human experience and activity. Voluntary actions should even encompass the acquisition of information about the environment. This goes well beyond the trivial idea that organisms must orient themselves to sources of sensations, by claiming that the very content and meaning of any experience is partially dependent on the goal-directed activity pursued by an organism. Voluntarism was compatible with idealism to the extent that they agreed that the on-going mental activities of a human being were largely responsible for the significance and meaning of one's experience. Voluntarism and idealism were unified by many philosophers in "organicism." Organicism, inspired by the German Romantic idealisms of Schelling and Hegel, rejected the mechanistic world-view in favor of the metaphor of the living organism. Its defense of teleological explanations of both human behavior and the natural world enjoyed a renaissance in the late 19th Century.

Philosophers at the forefront of physiological and experimental psychology in Germany were typically aligned with idealism, voluntarism, and organicism. Primary examples include Gustav Fechner, Hermann Helmholtz, Hermann Lotze, and Wilhelm Wundt. In Darwin's own land, English universities were slow to reconcile the native empiricism of John Locke and John Stuart

Mill with the on-going psychological revolutions. Experimental laboratories were discouraged and psychology departments failed to gain independence until well into the 20th Century. Revealingly, the task of challenging sensationalism and associationism fell to those few idealists, especially James Ward and G. F. Stout, whose disdain for the excesses of both Hegelian absolutism and materialism permitted their appreciation for the "new" advanced psychology fermenting across the Channel. The Americans who were most completely aligned with voluntaristic organicism were William James and the Chicago functionalists. They explicitly applied biological/physiological terms and principles to their experimental study of the mind's processes. While the application of "function" to mental activity dated back to early 19th Century phrenology, James and Dewey imbedded the term in a sophisticated philosophy of mind.

Functionalism, Genetic Psychology, and Structuralism

In America the struggle between sensationalism and the new psychology became a strange spectacle, as former students of Wundt competed for supremacy. The most senior American psychologist, William James, brought Wundt's experimental methodology and voluntaristic philosophy to Harvard, setting up the first psychological laboratory in America in 1875. James also published *The Principles of Psychology* in 1890, which was the first book to present the new psychology to the English-speaking world. G. Stanley Hall studied with both Wundt and James in the 1870s. He was then brought to Johns Hopkins University in 1882 where he found Charles S. Peirce already conducting psychological experiments with Joseph Jastrow. The initial dominance of Wundtian voluntarism in America was sustained by the next generation. Hall's students taught the new psychology and set up their own laboratories. Jastrow, Dewey, James McKeen Cattell (who received his Ph.D. from Wundt), and E. C. Sanford were all giving instruction in experimental psychology by 1890.

Dewey gradually integrated Hegelian organicism with Wundtian voluntarism, as evident in his "The New Psychology," to form a recognizably functionalist psychology as early as 1886. Dewey explicitly credits James's *Principles of Psychology* for providing the naturalistic standpoint from which to elaborate the details of his functionalism. James Angell was a graduate student of both Dewey at Michigan and William James at Harvard; he then joined the Michigan faculty and followed Dewey on to Chicago in 1894. George Mead, also a student of James, was hired by Dewey at Michigan and also followed him to Chicago.

Other Wundtian-inspired psychologists permeated American universities. George T. Ladd at Yale, one of the first to absorb Wundtian principles, hired Wundt's student Edward Scripture. James brought another of Wundt's students, Hugo Munsterberg, to Harvard in 1892 to conduct the psychological investigations. Another prominent psychologist, James Mark Baldwin, studied with Wundt in 1884 and subsequently inaugurated experimental psychology at Princeton, Toronto, and Johns Hopkins. One of Wundt's most successful students was Edward Titchener, who received his Ph.D. in 1892 and inaugurated psychology at Cornell.

By the mid-1890s three distinct camps emerged in American philosophy/psychology. Each was led by psychologists who were also full-fledged philosophers with metaphysical and epistemology standpoints, capable of pursuing their disagreements across the psychology and philosophy journals. The James-Dewey functionalism remained closest to its Wundtian origins in organicism and voluntarism. Baldwin's genetic psychology recoiled from their idealistic-leaning empiricism and imbedded his Wundtian voluntarism in a realistic metaphysics. Titchener's structuralism read into Wundt an associationism aligned with the British empiricist tradition.

However, by 1910 the structuralist-functionalist contest was over, Baldwin was largely forgotten, and functionalism (with its offspring, behaviorism) dominated American psychology for another generation. Two decades later, after Harvey Carr succeeded Angell as the leader of the Chicago School, functionalism's standpoint on empirical psychology was still highly influential. While the "school" of functionalism was no longer a prominent feature of academia by 1950, its principles and not those of structuralism had been permanently incorporated into the entire discipline.

Dewey's Debt to James

The 1903 *Studies in Logical Theory* presented the Chicago functionalists' work on various aspects of logic, including inference, judgment, belief, and knowledge. Their choice of topic was hardly unusual for the philosophical climate of their day or the present, but the standpoint taken on these central matters was revolutionary. In Dewey's preface, the philosophical stance of the *Studies in Logical Theory* is as follows:

> All agree, the editor takes the liberty of saying, that judgment is the central function of knowing, and hence affords the central problem of logic; that since the act of knowing is intimately and indissolubly connected with the like yet diverse functions of affection, appreciation, and practice, it only distorts results reached to treat knowing as a self-enclosed and self-explanatory whole—hence the intimate connections of logical theory with functional psychology; that since knowledge appears as a function within experience, and yet passes judgment upon both the processes and contents of other

> functions, its work and aim must be distinctively reconstructive or transformatory; that since Reality must be defined in terms of experience, judgment appears accordingly as the medium through which the consciously effected evolution of Reality goes on; that there is no reasonable standard of truth (or of success of the knowing function) in general, except upon the postulate that Reality is thus dynamic or self-evolving, and, in particular, except through reference to the specific offices which knowing is called upon to perform in readjusting and expanding the means and ends of life. And all agree that this conception gives the only promising basis upon which the working methods of science, and the proper demands of the moral life, may cooperate.[1]

The contributors, aware of their controversial stance, stood together with the rest of the department as a group to stand or fall together. After outlining the general approach taken by the contributors for analyzing logical theory, Dewey particularly thanked his colleagues who did not contribute to the *Studies* (these were George H. Mead, James H. Tufts, James R. Angell, and Edward S. Ames). Finally, speaking for all, Dewey singled out William James as the chief inspiration for their common standpoint and method.

The connection between the general approach to logic taken by the *Studies* and William James would not have been easily grasped by a contemporary reader of this new book. But this expression of appreciation was no insincere or timid attempt to place some responsibility on the broader shoulders of a more prominent philosopher. First, William James's reputation at that time primarily rested on his earlier work in psychology, although by 1903 his appointment was in philosophy. Only those who had closely studied James's 1890 *Principles of Psychology* or followed James's few philosophical publications from 1897 to 1903 had a chance to surmise the real nature of the Chicago philosophers' genuine debt to James. James published his own completed theory of consciousness and knowledge later on, in a series of articles from 1904-1906 and the 1907 *Pragmatism*. Even James himself didn't quite see the full scope of his influence, but he was very pleased to welcome these new converts to his ever-expanding corps of pragmatists.

> Chicago has a School of Thought!—a school of thought which, it is safe to predict, will figure in literature as the School of Chicago for twenty-five years to come. Some universities have plenty of thought to show, but no school; others plenty of school, but no thought. The University of Chicago, by its Decennial Publications, shows real thought and a real school. Professor John Dewey, and at least ten of his disciples, have collectively put into the world a statement, homogeneous in spite of so many cooperating minds, of a view of the world, both theoretical and practical, which is so simple, massive, and positive that, in spite of the fact that many parts of it yet need to be worked out, it deserves the title of a new system of philosophy. If it be as true as it is original, its publication must be reckoned an important event. The present reviewer, for one, strongly suspects it of being true. [2]

James approvingly outlined the basic tenets of the *Studies:* its evolutionary and empirical foundations, the functionalist theory of thought as a process of reconstructing failed activity, and the notion that knowledge and truth is forever in the making as human experience grows and adjusts. The attentive reader would have heard James's own emerging philosophical views in these few tenets. James concludes by pointing out the remarkable convergence of the Chicago school with the movement of "pragmatism" led by James himself, and with the "humanism" of F. C. S. Schiller at Oxford.

The Chicago philosophers rarely referred to themselves as pragmatists, although they warmly acknowledged the welcoming arms of the pragmatic philosophers who had preceded them into the bright spotlight of philosophical attention. When labeling themselves, the preferred term was usually "instrumentalist." Instrumentalism is essentially the philosophical application of the work done by functional psychology. As seen in his quotation above, Dewey stressed that the understanding of human knowledge requires an adequate logical theory, and that logical theory should use the methods of functional psychology. The background empirical assumption is that philosophy strays into sterile transcendentalism unless its discourse is concerned solely with reality and truth as manifested in human experience and knowledge. This empiricism, together with the functional approach to knowledge, implies that philosophy must use the methods of functional psychology to make any progress. It was precisely this revolutionary conclusion that excited James, for he found that the Chicago school had arrived at the foundations of his own position, displayed in his *Principles of Psychology.*

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1. John Dewey et al., *Studies in Logical Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1903), p. x.

2. William James, "The Chicago School," *Psychological Bulletin* 1.1 (15 Jan. 1904): 1.

WJ & Whitehead's "Philosophy of the Organism"

by Leandro Martín Gaitán

The third period of Alfred North Whitehead's work covers from 1924 when he abandoned England to take an appointment at Harvard until his death in 1947 In that period of his work, identified by Lowe[1] as the time of "Philosophy of the Organism", there are often references to William James in Whitehead's texts, mainly in his three most important works, *Science and the Modern World* (1925), *Process and Reality* (1929), and *Adventures of Ideas* (1933).

In fact, most of Whitehead's theories received in Harvard some strong influence from William James. Whitehead calls James an "adorable genius"[2], and adds later, "He also possessed the clear, incisive genius which could state in a flash the exact point at issue"[3]. The are at least four topics of Whitehead's philosophy which can be related with James's thought:

1) the creative process,
2) the theory of actual entities,
3) the theory of prehensions, and
4) the conciliation of the subject-object duality.

1) The creative process:

The nuclear idea of the Philosophy of the Organism is that of creative process. It is related to James's notion of the world as a "stream". In the formulation of Whitehead's notion, the latest discoveries of physical science and the influence of Henry Bergson's *Creative Evolution* and Samuel Alexander's *Space, Time and Deity*, among others, converge. James considers reality as a continuous process of self-formation, by which new pulsations of individuality add to the preceding ones and take possession of them to create an ever-progressive universe, in which permanency and emergency, continuity and novelty occur at the same time. Accordingly, for Whitehead the universal reality is determined in a process or development that is similar to that of a living organism, in which every event finds its meaning in the organic relation maintained with all the other events which make up the universe. Such event involves all the others, in the same way as it is involved in every other event. Events are the facts which occur in a "here" and a "now", in a distinctive singularity, constituting complex and interdependent drops of experience, which are included in the "whole event" that is nature to become.

2) The theory of actual entities:

This theory is related to James's conception of the world as an ontological plurality. James, who in turn inherits this idea from Charles Renouvier, has "come, by long brooding over it, to consider it the most central of all philosophical problems, central because so pregnant"[4]. According to James, there is no absolute unity of the universe—a compact and perfect block-universe, but a plurality of primary forms integrated in the whole by means of its mutual connections. Thus, the world of pluralism may be compared more to a federal republic rather than to an empire or kingdom. Moreover, Whitehead argues that reality is made up of a multiplicity of events or actual entities, inter-related and within a process to come that characterizes its particular way of being. Besides, "each existing actual entity is necessarily different form all the others which are, have been or will be, because of the fact that they suppose a novel element in their birth and since they include all the previous actual entities in their composition."[5] In the same way as James, Whitehead intends to replace substance by a dynamic element, and monism by the idea of a plurality in unity. Both of them oppose mainly to Bradley's absolute idealism.

3) The theory of prehensions:

"Prehension" is a term coined by Whitehead in which he confers "experience" to the whole reality, or more precisely, identifies reality with experience. This means that it is part of the organic process in which different parts of the universe "feel" reciprocally. In effect, the essence of the universe is a primary "feeling", similar to what we consider as emotionality. Hence, we may say that events "feel" everything that in the universe develops beyond the event and, at the same time, it is felt by all the others. Thus, the existing connection between all the events constitutes, as mentioned before, the "whole event" that is the world of concrescence. From an analogous consideration, which is characteristic in James, the insistence on a plurality of finite centers of experience together with their connections, is far from the idea of a discontinuous and fragmented world. Therefore, the world still being multiverse makes up a universe since "all things cohere and adhere to each other somehow, and that the universe exists practically in reticulated or concatenated forms which make of it a continuous or 'inte-

1. V. Lowe, *Understanding Whitehead*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1962, 219.
2. A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, Macmillan, New York, 1925, 3.
3. A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, 147
4. William James, *Pragmatism*, in *The Works of William James*, F. H. Burkhardt et al, eds., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1975, vol I, 64.
5. J. Enjuto Bernal, *La filosofía de Alfred North Whitehead*, Tecnos, Madrid, 1967, 41.

grated' affair."[1]

4) Consciousness, experience, and conciliation of the duality subject-object:

In this point, Whitehead echoes James's thought arguing that we must not contrast thought and reality, subject and object, but insert the former in the latter. Thus, if such bipolarity is sustained as an irreducible supposition, the subject will never reach the object. Consciousness is a higher degree of mental activity which presupposes experience and not the other way around. Therefore, in his Science and the Modern World, Whitehead quotes the following paragraph from James's essay "Does Consciousness Exist?":

> There is, I mean, no aboriginal stuff or quality of being, contrasted with that of which material objects are made, out of which our thoughts of them are made; but there is a function in experience which thoughts perform, and for the performance of which this quality of being is invoked. That function is knowing. 'Consciousness' is supposed necessary to explain the fact that things not only are, but get reported, are known.[2]

In more general terms, Whitehead states: "It is tacitly assumed, except by Plato, that the more fundamental factors will ever lend themselves for discrimination with peculiar clarity. This assumption is here directly challenged"[3]. In this sense, Whitehead agrees with the anti-Cartesians characteristic of the pragmatist thought, as regards the conciliation of the dualities subject-object, matter-soul, theory-praxis, which he denominates as "bifurcation of nature".

Besides these five fields of connection, it is important to mention other topics that bring both philosophers together, for instance the questions regarding God's finite nature, human creativity, continuity of nature, and religious experience. However, due to space limitations, I have devoted myself only to those which I regard as fundamental because of the role they play in both philosophers' thought. I cannot avoid mentioning their mutual intention to reconcile the scientific perspective with the religious perspective of the world. Finally, it is important to notice that, although both philosophers agree in most cases in relation to the substantial, they do not necessarily do it in every aspect. If we analyzed thoroughly such analogies, we indubitably would find differences. But what I have wanted to emphasize here is, firstly, the admiration and sympathy showed by Whitehead towards James; and secondly, the existing familiarity between the two philosophies and the manifest influence of one on the other.

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1. W. James, *Pragmatism*, 68.
2. A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern*, 206.
3. A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, Macmillan, New York, 1933, 225.

Whitehead's Axiomatization of the Contiguism of "Pure Feeling"

by Michel Weber

The previous issues of *Streams of William James* have suggested how James onto-epistemology could be interpreted as a contiguism of pure experience. The depth of the "suggestion level" was directly linked to our understanding of the peculiarities of James' philosophical style, as they have been lately exposed. When inquiring into Whitehead's thought, however, one can be more systematic, precisely because of the personal inflection given by the British philosopher to a fundamentally similar style.

Although this short note will unfold the allusions that have, explicitly or implicitly, riddled the earlier arguments, it is *not* designed as a comparison between the two authors. Comparing two speculative systems is very seldom successful, perhaps because to do so one has to actualize the conditions of possibility of such a dialogue, something that obviously *first* requires the clarification of these conditions. Since that "transcendental" question is not treated here, we will not justify the application to Whitehead of the argument that has been previously devised for James. The paper follows thus a similar triadic structure: first, the continuous/discontinuous dialectic is outlined in his philosophy of nature; second, it is explicated how Whitehead's "reformed subjectivist principle" grounds his "critique of pure feeling" or "panexperientialism"; third, the "contiguism of pure feeling" of his metaphysical period is introduced.

I. Contiguism

Just as if Whitehead's categories were not difficult enough in themselves, their development sometimes seems even trickier to understand. As a matter of interest: Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) had successively taught at Trinity College (Cambridge), Imperial College of Science and Technology (London), and eventually at the other Cambridge, the one of the State

of Massachusetts, i.e., the John Harvard University. Tireless polygrapher, after a distinguished career of logician and algebraist (1891-1913), of philosopher of science and philosopher of nature (1914-1923), he framed in Harvard a revolutionary ontology in "anti-metaphysical" times *par excellence* (1924-1947). Let us first adumbrate how he conceives the meshing of the continuous and discontinuous aspects of natural experience.

His *Concept of Nature* (1920) builds a very powerful phenomenology of perception on the rejection of the "bifurcation of nature". Nature is bifurcated when a disjunction is installed between subject and object, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, with the unexpected (?) result that the world of life and the world of science become simply incompatible. On thinking it over, however, it is obvious that the Cartesian opposition of two irreducible "substances" has not only authorised, but spurred the maturation of the techno-scientific project. One can never insist too much on the radicality of the breach that occurred in the XVIIth century when a clear cut difference has been made between clear and distinct ideas, and the hydra of vagueness embodied in corporeity or in insane minds (cf. Michel Foucault). Anyway, Locke's systematization of Robert Boyle's first "scientific" analysis of perception—the famous primary and secondary qualities—seals a quite paradoxical system of thought: "there would be two natures", Whitehead says, "one is the conjecture and the other is the dream." (CN30) Substance ontology and the theory of psychic additions cannot be separated.

Whitehead rages against that bifurcation with a distinction between sense perception and sense-awareness (a binomial that announces his late distinction between presentational immediacy and causal efficacy).[1] "Nature as perceived always has a ragged edge." (CN50) On the one hand, we have the facts perceived as entities; on the other, the factors of fact that are of relational and durational nature. With these all-embracing relations, it is the whole occurrence of nature that is silently experienced. For commodity of exposition, that distinction can be said to be the worthy heir of James' concept of the "fringe of experience"[2] : the *Principles of Psychology* distinguish between the experiential nucleus (which is definite) and its fringe, halo, or penumbra (which is constituted by the more or less vague contextualization, i.e., the web of meaning-giving relations).[3] The clear and distinct phenomena receive their significance and value from this "penumbra that surrounds and escorts it."[4] In the very same way James re-establishes the pedigree of the idea of "vagueness", Whitehead considers vagueness as primordial as value : the fundamental is not, and does not have to be, settled, clear and distinct.

What matters for Whitehead is the "creative advance of nature" (CN178): there is an ever-ending natural unrest that constantly brings forth new cosmic features. Nature is an eventful seamless tapestry, flowing as waves of unprecedented value. Its continuity of nature is the continuity of events—"an isolated event is not an event" (CN142)—and arises from *extension* (CN59): every event extends over—and is extended over by—other events. However, this insistence on the pure flux disclosed by experience does not obliterate its other equiprimordial dimension: recognition. Hence the introduction of the concept of "object" to balance the all-embracing "events". Objects, claims CN125, are "factors which are without passage". They are the ingredients of the events, what makes them pattern-like. To name the event-object relation, Whitehead speaks of "ingression"; where events are essentially "difference", objects are essentially "sameness". Out of the indefinite number of types of objects, he hierarchizes and correlates "sense-objects" (a particular sort of colour, sound, smell, or feeling), "perceptual objects" (what we perceive is not a mere patch of colour, but a coat, a dog…), and "scientific objects" (such as an electron).

The status to be given to these objects is a bit difficult to specify in a short note. On the one hand, CN makes it very clear that it is not attempting a metaphysical synthesis: "the recourse to metaphysics is like throwing a match into the powder magazine. It blows up the whole arena".[5] Its explicit duty is to discuss the concepts involved in the new achievements of science (the nascent quantum mechanics and the Einsteinian relativities) without bifurcation. It does so with an insider's perspective on the most recent theories of that time, as they can be put in perspective with the history of ideas. (Whitehead has, e.g., a thorough tech-

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1. MT110 presents his views in a non-technical manner.

2. CN73 uses the expression "fringe of memory tinged with anticipation".

3. *The Principles of Psychology* (New York, Dover Publications, 1950) indicate that there are various categories of fringe experiences. Rather than attempting an exhaustive list or a systematic analysis of their relations to each other, they offer a few examples: feelings of familiarity (p. 252), feelings of knowing (p. 251), feelings of relation (p. 245), feelings of action tendency (p. 253), attitudes of expectancy (p. 250), feelings of "rightness" or being "on-the-right-track" (pp. 259-261). (For all this, cf. David Galin, "The Structure of Awareness. Contemporary Application of William James's Forgotten Concept of «the Fringe»", *Journal of Mind and Behavior*, 15, 4, 1994, pp. 375-400.)

4. William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, op. cit., pp. 254-255.

5. CN29; earlier, he claimed: "The values of nature are perhaps the key to the metaphysical synthesis of existence. But such a synthesis is exactly what I am not attempting. I am concerned exclusively with the generalisations of widest scope which can be effected respecting that which is known to us as the direct deliverance of sense-awareness." (CN5)

nical knowledge of Michael Faraday, James Clerk Maxwell and Albert Einstein.) Space, time (better: spacetime), motion and the question of the conditions of possibility of measure are thus its core questions. Since "science is not a fairy tale" (CN40), the philosophy of science can fruitfully bring about a renewed philosophy of nature. On the other hand, there is an almost unavoidable Platonism in the speculations of mathematicians: the language Whitehead uses, together with the development he will give to his ideas cannot but lead to the assessment of his Platonic heritage. Furthermore, the bottom point of CN's argument is to falsify the epistemological consequences of Aristotelian logic, which is tightly interwoven with his substance *ontology*. All this should be clarified by the study of his late concepts of "enduring object" and "eternal object".

II. Reformed Subjectivism

Whitehead's first metaphysical speculations were published in *Science and the Modern World* (1925). That fundamental work redistributes the continuity-discontinuity dialectic in the light of the onto-*logical* requirements of the emergence of true novelty. Before diving into the main categories of *Process and Reality* (1929), that develops SMW's insights with that regard, we have to introduce his reformed subjectivism.

The "reformed subjectivist principle" states the following: considering that, on the one hand, human beings are fully part of Nature (rejection of the bifurcation); and that, on the other, their *existence* constitutes the part of Nature the best known to them (i.e., immediately), we are fully justified in exporting—at least to some extent—the knowledge of ourselves to the rest of Nature. What is at stake here are the characteristics of an unavoidable *but* reasonable anthropomorphism: there is no anthropocentrism or even panpsychism to be found in the Whiteheadian ontology. The philosopher distinguishes two roots to his subjectivist reform.

First, the rejection of the "sensationalist doctrine", doctrine that can be analysed in two parts: "the Subjectivist Principle" and "the Sensationalist Principle." It is mainly Hume's doctrine of "impressions of sensation" that is targeted[1]. On the one hand, we have the *unreformed* subjectivism, claiming basically that all the data of experience can be described purely in terms of universals, i.e., independently of particular entities (PR157). On the other, the sensationalist principle, maintaining that experience consists in the welcoming, by an autarkic subject, of a purely ossified given. Accordingly, all perception is a *sensory* perception, and if the subject is the only active pole, it is a very limited activity that is at work here (cf. "all is nothing but to perceive"[2]). For instance, Kant subscribed totally to the unreformed subjectivism, but only partially to the sensationalism, experience being for him above all a construct. Whitehead keeps the idea of the construction of reality, but puts the Kantian figure upside down: it is no more the subject that constitutes the object in the context of a dualistic understanding, but the objects that constitute the subject in a purely horizontal ontology. A crucial point can thus already be made: by definition, subjects cannot be void of experience, i.e., of (subjective) immediacy, intensity which is directly correlated to intrinsic value[3]. According to the organic philosophy, "vacuous actualities" make no sense whatsoever, full stop.

Second, the destruction of the presuppositions of the sensationalist doctrine—mainly the bipolar ontology substance-quality, as it is produced by a certain interpretation of the subject-predicate structure of language (the "vacuous actuality" hypothesis). Substance-quality ontology is at the root of the Modern drift: on the one hand, substance does not allegedly ask for anything to exist; on the other, accidents exist only when belonging to a given substance. Whitehead claims that Descartes' definition of substance ("when we conceive of substance, we merely conceive an existent thing which requires nothing but itself in order to exist") is a "true derivative from Aristotle's definition"[4]. The difficulties of Modern philosophers come from the fact that they adopt the subjectivist principle while still using the old Aristotelian categories. However, these categories are not useless or even false, as their use in everyday life testifies, they simply are not fit for metaphysical speculation[5]. Predicative ontology has to be replaced by a propositional one, and the "obstinate refusal of philosophers to take seriously the ultimate fact of multiple relations" (CN150) repudiated.

In conclusion, the "reformed subjectivist principle" intends to start from the philosopher's own experience, as it is irremediably private *and* public, and to promote the categorical change required. The positive side of the rejection of vacuous actualities is the affirmation of the universality of *experience*. "Apart from the experiences of subjects, there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness." (PR167) From a method-

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1. PR157 sq. referring itself to Hume's *Treatise*, Book I, Part I, Sect. II.

2. David Hume, *Treatise*, Part II, Sect. VI, quoted by PR130 and 146.

3. "Vacuous entities" (PR29), i.e., "void of subjective experience" (PR167 and cf. PR157-158).

4. PR50 quoting Descartes' *The Second Meditation*; cf. also Aristotle's *Categories*, 5, 3a. Unfortunately, Whitehead's claim is not very respectful of the idiosyncrasies of these two authors.

5. "Like Columbus who never visited America, Descartes missed the full sweep of his own discovery, and he and his successors, Locke and Hume, continued to construe the functionings of the subjective enjoyment of experience according to the substance-quality categories." (PR159; cf. PR167) Piaget shares that opinion.

ological point of view, philosophy starts, and ends, with experience; from an ontological point of view, the Universe is constituted by the interweaving of experiencing subjects ("panexperientialism"). It is remarkable, however, that the subject-object difference does not fade at all in the philosophy of Harvard; it is simply made *process*. This will be clarified in a moment; for the time being, we need to concentrate on the nature of that "experience".

The reformulation, in his "metaphysical period", of the binomial sense perception/sense-awareness, gives birth to the binomial presentational immediacy/causal efficacy. For the sake of the present inquiry, suffice it to say that the former names the clear-cut picture of the World delivered by our—highly specialized—senses; and that the latter names the vague, indistinct, pressure of past events on our present experience. Whitehead's intuition is quite simple here: out of the welter of the remnant *past* experiences, there is selection (filtration), contrast (comparison) and eventually projection (construction) of a *contemporary* world. That world is thus, so to speak, in adherence to the World itself; vagueness has become clearness and distinctness. One of the most important characteristics of the philosophy of organism is indeed its ability to combine a healthy realism with a radical constructivism.

If the world disclosed in presentational immediacy is a meaningful—and useful—one, it is because of its direct causal filiation. The value of the presented world belongs to everyday life, the life of action in a competitive, if not threatening, environment. For its part, the value of the causal world is to be found in the ontological anchorage it provides, something that is of special interest for speculation. So far, no distinction has been made among the various senses, but some are more insistent in our normal state of consciousness, and there is furthermore a cultural valuation of senses. Exteroception (the five senses directed toward the "outside") provides a more or less clear-cut picture of our surroundings, thereby carving everyday consciousness. Interoception (internal sensitivity) and proprioception (messages of position and movement allowing, with the help of the internal ear's semi-circular canals, a spatialisation of the body) belong more to unconscious experience of the body-*in*-the-World. Whitehead claims that philosophy has been overinfluenced by the world picture delivered by exteroception (and especially by vision), factually effacing interoception and proprioception. The functionings of our viscera—or, more broadly speaking, the "withness of the body"—is of primordial importance for metaphysics because it exemplifies "perception in the mode of causal efficacy" (the other main exemplification being memory—cf. PR121-122).

We are now able to circumscribe the nature of the "pure feeling" (PR113) promoted by our author: rather than accepting presentational immediacy at face value, philosophy has to go back to the brute wealth of causal efficacy, and to isolate its marrow, "enjoyment" or "subjective immediacy" (PR41 and *passim*). "The organic philosophy interprets experience as meaning the "self-enjoyment of being one among many, and of being one arising out of the composition of many"." (PR145) The primitive form of experience is *emotional* (PR162).

III. Contiguism of Pure Feeling

Two principal points have been made so far: on the one hand, Whitehead's philosophy of nature emphasizes the notion of a pure eventful continuity while protecting the evidence of punctal existences; on the other, his late metaphysics crystallises around the idea of a pure feeling constituting not only the immediacy of the subject, but the "primal stuff" of the World as well as the condition of the dynamic togetherness of the subjects and the objects (panexperientialist wager). Sketching PR's ontological atomism should now allow a better insight of the synergy of these two traits.

When Whitehead decides to throw a match into the powder magazine, he introduces a concept inspired by James' drops of experience: the "actual entity". Actual entities "are the final real things of which the world is made up. There is no going behind actual entities to find anything more real. […] The final facts are, all alike, actual entities; and these actual entities are drops of experience, complex and interdependent. (PR18) The conscious experience of a subject is thus actually made of a consecution (string or sequence) of atomic events, each being a particular mode of togetherness of the universe. As a result, his ontology systematically studies three main areas: the becoming, the being, and the relatedness of actual entities (PRxiii).

The becoming—or "concrescence"—of actual entities is the crux of the matter in so far as vivid private—i.e., subjective—experience is concerned. When "the many become one" it is *ipso facto* accompanied by subjective immediacy and enjoyment. To put it another way, the process of concrescence names the ontological mystery itself: at the confluence of God and the World[1], a totally new mode of togetherness of all past events is actualised, thereby creating new value, new enjoyment. When a "genetic analysis" of the actual entity subject is lead, it concentrates on "prehensions": one speculates then on the selective appropriation, contrast, and contrast of contrast of the various prehended data. The mighty image Whitehead uses is "feeling of feelings": in his technicalities, a *feeling* is a

[1] The introduction of the *concept* of God, an essential feature of Whitehead's ontology, cannot be approached here.

positive prehension of the feeling(s) of other actualities. Of course, the concept has been purified in order to be applicable to any actual entity, whatever its grade. The higher grade of mental activity human beings testify are in continuity with lower grades; there is no difference in kind, only (huge) difference in degree.

"What really *exists* is not things made but things in the making. Once made, they are dead, and an infinite number of alternative conceptual decompositions can be used in defining them[1]." That Jamesian claim definitely resonates in the ontology of Harvard. When the process of concrescence has reached its end, when out of a mere multiplicity a new unity has crystallised, the actual entity topples into objectivity; from actual entity-subject, it turns into actual entity-object. So, through *concrescence*, "the many become one" and, through *transition*, "the many are increased by one" (PR21). The actuality-subject *exists*; is in determination; the actuality-object *is*, is determinated. Genetic analysis is not possible here, but instead a "coordinate analysis" is required: processes of integration and of reintegration are so to speak replaced by a pure position in being (more precisely, the analysis is carried on the extensive standpoint occupied by the actuality-subject). What really matters for our argument is summarized in the "principle of process": "how an actual entity becomes constitutes what that actual entity is ; […] its "being" is constituted by its "becoming." (PR23) In other words, subjectivity *constitutes*, again and again, objectivity. The concept of "substance" is replaced by various "societies", the simplest one being the "enduring object", which is made of a continuous line of inheritance among successive actual entities. There is a trajectory of actualities-object crowned by an actuality-subject, soon to topple into objectivity and to be followed by a new concrescence. That never-ending innovatory unrest is what Whitehead names the "creative advance".

A quick glance at the relatedness of actual entities will disclose the contiguism at work here. Rather than injecting in the discussion the binomial physical pole / mental pole, we use the old opposition between external and internal relations. To make a long story short, let us say that Whitehead claims for his societies of actualities subject and object *both* types of relations. The actuality-subject, i.e., the actuality in determination is externally related, it constitutes a separate quantum of existence, *and* internally related to the universe, the power of the past is active at the nucleus of the concrescence. The key is once again the subject-object difference: among subjects—and among objects—there can be only external relations; but the relation subject-object is more subtle. Given a subject prehending an object, the vector-like relation instituted is *external* from the perspective of the (prehended) object and *internal* from the perspective of the (prehending) subject. The concrescence of any one actual entity necessarily involves the other actual entities among its components, but these actualities-object constitute a complete whole.

In conclusion, the atomism of Whitehead's Harvard epoch is far from being monadological; concrescing actualities have "windows" and are thus Janus-like: on the one hand, they constitute a quantum (or drop) of existence; on the other, they are the product and the actor of a continuous innovatory process. The continuous features of the universe are generated quantically, "every act of becoming must have an immediate successor" (PR69). That tight intermingling of continuity and discontinuity fully deserve the "contiguist" label. It is a contiguism of pure feeling because of the prehensions involved in the processes of concrescence and of transition, and especially because of their emotional tone. These are remote from the edges of normal consciousness, and convey the primordial form of ontological enjoyment.

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SMW : Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*. The Lowell Lectures, 1925, New York, The Free Press, 1967.

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[1] William James, *A Pluralistic Universe*. Hibbert Lectures at Manchester College on the Present Situation in Philosophy, Edited by Fredson Bowers and Ignas K. Skrupskelis, Introduction by Richard J. Bernstein, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1977, p. 117.

On William James's "Springs of Delight": The Return to Life

by Phil Oliver

(Editor's Note: The following is the preface to Vanderbilt Library of American Philosophy's book by Phil, to be published in December, 2000.)

Asked what my work on William James is about, I am always challenged to find a pithy reply. So wide was the range of James's concerns, so enduring is his broad relevance, and so habituated am I to finding a Jamesian slant on everything, that any terse statement feels irresponsibly shallow and misleading. But summaries *are* helpful, especially to prospective readers.

This book is, therefore, about the centrality for life of personal enthusiasms and habitual "delights" and their power to make our days meaningful, delightful, spiritual, and even transcendent. Such enthusiasms, or subjective ways of reacting to life and upon it, are natural for us. They are at the heart of a vision of life at once spiritual and deeply rooted in "the open air and possibilities of nature."[1] When our days become pale, tedious, or abstract, they sponsor our "return to life" in all its rich, robust, and personal concreteness. The natural provenance of such enthusiasms distinguishes them from the putatively supernatural incursions of convulsive "Enthusiasm" that Harold Bloom finds at the core of "the American Religion."[2] Jamesian transcendence is thus a variety of naturalism, though decidedly not that "present day materialism, which may better be called naturalism," which "leave[s] the destinies of the world at the mercy of its blinder parts and forces."[3] Jamesian naturalism, while not naive about those impersonal forces that largely shape material reality, assigns a destiny-shaping, evolutionary role to the emergent personal and cultural forces of intelligence and the human spirit as gifts of nature that may come one day to exert constructive influence on all our affairs. It finds nothing incongruous about nature and spirit in harness together. In fact, "the conception of spirit, as we mortals hitherto have framed it, is itself too gross to cover the exquisite tenuity of nature's facts."[4] We, in our teeming subjective particularity, are nature's most exquisite natural fact. We personalize nature:

> The only form of thing that we directly encounter, the only experience that we concretely have, is our own personal life.... And this systematic denial on science's part of personality as a condition of events, this rigorous belief that in its own essential and innermost nature our world is a strictly impersonal world, may, conceivably, as the whirligig of time goes round, prove to be the very defect that our descendants will be most surprised at in our own boasted science, the omission that to their eyes will most tend to make it look perspectiveless and short.[5]

Jamesian naturalism and the transcendence it favors have to do with the unique, partly incommunicable ways in which each of us may make vital connection with our respective personal, spiritual natures. It notices and celebrates our differences; but in the same glance it recognizes their anchorage in something we share, not just a common biology but especially a common capacity for embracing our own enthusiasms, just as we extend sympathetic respect for those of our compadres, ancestors, and descendants. In that light Jamesian transcendence is also about overcoming narrow egotism and expanding our sense of who we are, individually and as a species across time and space.

What objects of enthusiasm can imaginably promise so much? Any we can imagine, and then some—baseball, say, or the Beatles, beer, Great Britain, literature, science, science fiction, Monet, Mozart, Kentucky whiskey, Tennessee walking horses, walking, running, tilling the soil, raising kids, healing, praying, meditating, thinking, teaching, learning, and on and on. Whatever disparate items may show up on anyone's list (these are a few that crop up in my own family circle), their crucial essence is to point at, but not to replicate or make transparent to others' grasp, the depths of experience and personal significance they attempt to name. I can tell you that I love baseball, but I cannot begin to convey precisely why or how or the extent to which baseball is important for my peculiar ways of experiencing and living in the world. By the same token your account of the joys of macramé, soccer, or cat-dancing will leave me in the dark. But it is a darkness rimmed by the glow of a phenomenon we should all recognize and treasure.

This book, then, is a paradoxical rumination on possibilities of delight both *beyond* but still, somehow, to some unspecifiably partial extent, *expressible in* words. James, like the most thoughtful philosophers and poets, wavered between the earnest wish to affirm and extend our humanistic inheritance of understanding and sympathy through language ("philosophy is essentially talkative and explicit"[6]) and an acute awareness of the intrinsic limitations of language that foreshadows the pragmatic elevation of deeds over creeds, actions over words, and engaged spontaneity over cool detachment. "The philosophy which is so important in each of us is not a technical matter; it is our more or less dumb sense of what life honestly and deeply means,"[7] a sense better enacted and enjoyed than enunciated. This creative tension was not resolved by James, who never stopped talking about the insufficiencies of talk:

> I am tiring myself and you, I know, by vainly seeking to describe by concepts and words what... exceeds either conceptualization or verbalization. As long as one continues *talking*, intellectualism remains in undisturbed possession of the field. The return to life can't come about by talking. It is an *act*; to make you return to life, I must set an example for your imitation, I must deafen you to talk, or to the importance of talk.... Or I must

> *point*, point to the mere *that* of life, and you by inner sympathy must fill out the *what* for yourselves.[8]

Having thus acknowledged the irony in pitching more words at rich phenomena that must elude them, I should explain the remainder of my title. James's richly imagistic phrase "springs of delight" equivocates judiciously between connotations of mechanism and organic nature, implying (as James does in general) the shared and natural sources of the varieties of human flourishing. Our transcendently delightful moments spring proximally from the body's marvelous biomechanism, and subjectivity modulates them with personal symbolism and the seeming spontaneity of pure and cleansing waters gushing from unplumbed depths. But then, curse our masochistically curious souls, we reflect and descend:

> A little cooling down of animal excitability and instinct, a little loss of animal toughness, a little irritable weakness and descent of the pain-threshold, will bring the worm at the core of all our usual springs of delight into full view, and turn us into melancholy metaphysicians.[9]

But usually, after suffering the "falling dead of the delight," we rebound: "the music can commence again;—and again and again—at intervals."[10] Our natural condition is to know both aspects of experience in turn, delighted "animal" spontaneity and angst-ridden cerebration. Our challenge is to reconcile them; our method, an uneasy mix of philosophy and untutored experience; our enemies, metaphysical malaise and that excessive intellectualism that discredits experience in advance. And our holy grail, the pearl of inestimable price, is no less than the promise and prospect of happiness, flourishing and fulfillment for ourselves and our kind.

Jamesian transcendence is not hostile to the verbal arts and, for some of us, is even inseparable from them. But it draws deeply from those subjective, personal realms of experience that in their fullness are truly beyond words, mysteriously and delightfully implicating "the fact that individuals vary from the human average in all sorts of directions..."[11] and dance to very different "music." Spontaneous deviation from the norm is not a total mystery, of course. The more we learn of our own evolutionary epic and the rich and growing complexity of life, the more we will have to say about the numinous nature that is our native habitat. But we can be confident and grateful that life will always exceed and overspill our words and, when they lure us into confusion or insubstantiality, will beckon our return.

The human spirit is intrinsically, inescapably personal but is also vitally related. If my book is occasionally more confessional than much contemporary philosophy, that is because my own vital relations have brought home to me the wisdom of "bond[ing] the personal narrative voice... to the human search for transcendence."[12] James says of Whitman that although he wrote autobiographically and in the first person, his practice was not from personal conceit but from the desire to speak expansively and vicariously for all.[13] Perhaps Whitman was ambitious, maybe presumptuous, but well motivated nonetheless. I intend my own voice in these pages to be illustratively personal, not exhibitionistic; but I know of no way to express the full meaning and importance of our subjective enthusiasms and commitments without speaking of my own. It may be customary to philosophize about such matters in abstraction and to hold subjectivity at arm's length from transcendence. My approach, however, is more like Thoreau's: "I should not talk so much about myself if there was anybody else whom I knew as well."[14] And Kierkegaard was right: Life is understood backwards but lived forwards—a homily best funded as the recognition that life is lived personally and concretely. There may be such a thing as a fallacy of misplaced concreteness, but not when it comes to understanding "the exuberant excess of [our] subjective propensities"[15] and the resulting spiritual dimensions of the subjective imagination.

Spirituality is the link of continuity between every human breath, every moment, and every epoch. It is what binds the personal, the social, and the philosophical. Life, as James says, is a chain: a flowing stream of succession to which we may contribute, not only through the spires of our genes but more overtly in our voluntary devotions and ideals. The living breath that measures our moments and days also marks the distance between an attentive present, coveted futures, and life's remote denouement. Respiration, inspiration, and aspiration are entwined aspects of the vision of life as a chain.

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Endnotes

1. *Pragmatism*. The Works of William James, ed. Frederick H. Burkhardt, Fredson Bowers, and Ignas K. Skrupskelis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 31.
2. Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Touchstone, 1992).
3. *Pragmatism*, 49
4. *Pragmatism*, 49–50
5. *Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, Works 1979, 241
6. *Some Problems in Philosophy*, Works 1979, 63
7. *Pragmatism*, 9
8. *A Pluralistic Universe*, Works 1977, 131
9. *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Works 1985, 119
10. *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 116
11. *Some Problems in Philosophy*, 9
12. Patricia Hampl, Introduction, *The Best Spiritual Writing 1998*, ed. Philip Zaleski (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1998), xv.
13. *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 76
14. Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (Boston: Beacon, 1997), 2.
15. *Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, 104

"Many Geniuses Coming Together…": Placing William James in Context

by Bill DeLoach

When you're trying to study a thing—photon, atom, finch, or person—one of the more useful questions you can ask is: Does this thing participate in any larger systems? What *else* is going on with this thing, beyond what I see in front of me this instant? I may seem to have a solitary item, but others may know where it was earlier, or whether it has kinfolk or connections of some kind.

1705 • In 1705 Edmond Halley, using an insight of his friend Isaac Newton — "All paths in the heavens are conic sections"—redescribed a bright spot in the night sky as not random, not a solitary item at all, but a recurrence of an event we now call Halley's Comet.

1836 • Charles Darwin, when he carried some bird specimens from the Galapagos back to England, discovered that they were called finches. He also discovered that his finches did indeed participate in a larger system—what today's researchers call a dynamical system, or a complex adaptive system. One could say that Darwin spent the rest of his life trying to spell out the nature and functions of such a system. By now we can safely say that all the king's horses and all the king's men (so to speak) who followed Darwin in this endeavor still have not finished this task. Not that the Riddle of Evolution was entirely insoluble—quite the contrary. But there was a sort of domino effect, so that as partial solutions began to unfold, their ramifications began to spread (that is, to be discussed by Darwin-aware thinkers) through adjacent realities; until it was hard to be sure just where the ripples would stop, or when the unfolding would end.

1880 • In 1880, one such worker in the Darwinian vineyard spoke to the Harvard Natural History Society. He was a young (38) writer and professor named William James. He was interested not in finches nor in comets, but in a certain subset of humans: Great Thinkers. In his talk on "Great Men and their Environment," he wondered not only about (A) Why do they occur at all?, but also about the related question: (B) Why do they seem to arrive in groups, in bunches?

"Sporadic great men come everywhere," said James. "But for a community to get vibrating through and through with intensely active life, many geniuses coming together and in rapid succession are required. This is why great epochs are so rare— why the sudden bloom of a Greece, an early Rome, a Renaissance, is such a mystery. Blow must follow blow so fast that no cooling can occur in the intervals. Then the mass of the nation grows incandescent, and may continue to glow by pure inertia long after the originators of its internal movement have passed away" (*Will to Believe* 242-243, cited hereinafter as *WB*). His conclusion, in short, was that the same kind of dynamics that help to account for the interactions over time between finches and the environments of the Galapagos Islands can also account for the interactions between "Great Men and their Environment." As he said, in two now-famous sentences: "The community stagnates without the impulse of the individual. The impulse dies away without the sympathy of the community" (*WB* 232).

• • •

We 21st Century folk can say with hindsight: "Well, it takes one to know one." That is, not only was William James an historical observer of great epochs like Ancient Greece or the Renaissance; he was also a very active participant in just such a group himself. Now we all know that prophets are without honor in their own countries—and that has certainly been the case with the six Classic American Philosophers. Maybe that's why it took a relative outsider to the United States and to Harvard, the transplanted British mathematician (by training) and metaphysician (by inclination) Alfred North Whitehead, to give the best early hint as to the existence, in America, of philosophers fit to stand beside the greats of the past.

1936 • In a letter written just before his 75th birthday, Whitehead predicts that "…in the oncoming generation, America will be the centre of worthwhile philosophy." Then he adds:

> My belief is that the effective founders of the American Renaissance are Charles Peirce and William James. Of these men, W.J. is the analogue to Plato, and C.P. to Aristotle, though the time-order does not correspond, and the analogy must not be pressed too far (Lowe, Vol. II, 345).

The "American Renaissance" in philosophy that Whitehead refers to was spelled out in more detail some fourteen years later in Max H. Fisch's anthology, *Classic American Philosophers:*

1951 • "It is increasingly apparent that American philosophy has had its classical period, corresponding to the Greek classical period from Democritus through Aristotle, the medieval Christian from Abelard through

Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, the British from Bacon through Hume, [from Descartes through Leibnitz on the continent at about the same time,] the German from Kant through Hegel.

"Our classical period began just after our Civil War and ended just before the Second World War. Its canon is already nearly fixed. It includes six philosophers. They are Charles Sanders Peirce [1839-1914], William James [1842-1910], Josiah Royce [1855-1916], George Santayana [1863-1952], John Dewey [1859-1952], and Alfred North Whitehead [1861-1947]."[1]

As Ketner and Kloesel point out, the scholarship of Max Fisch is "meticulous," and this General Introduction in particular is "masterly." We can't bring you all 39 pages (with their 123 footnotes) at this point, but I do want to share enough of Fisch's argument to make you restless until you've read the whole thing.

"The history of philosophy in western civilization," Fisch begins, "has a general continuity from which no single thinker or local movement is quite cut off. There emerge, however, certain widely separated periods within which the continuity is more pervasive and intensive. Such periods are… "[here the five just mentioned—Greek, medieval Christian, British, continental, and German—are listed; to which this manifesto proposes to add a sixth 'classic period': American].

"We may call such a period classic in the sense that the leading philosophic tendencies of the culture in which it arises reach within it

- a fullness of expression,
- a mutual definition,
- a synthesis or equilibrium, and
- a permanent embodiment in texts which rapidly acquire the status of a canon and which determine the directions in which further reflection moves for generations or centuries thereafter."[2]

With these criteria stated, Fisch shows how the "more pervasive and intensive continuity" he refers to is manifested by his six American Philosophers, using three overall headings:

(A) Personal Relations (pp. 1-8)

In these pages Fisch traces the Harvard connections for five of his six philosophers (all but Dewey; who nonetheless served as William James Lecturer in 1931, when he "was briefly a colleague of Whitehead, and delivered at Harvard the lectures from which his *Art as Experience* grew") (2). Fisch also discusses the Johns Hopkins connection for four of his six, and makes note of "numerous cross-fertilizations" among the group (5). "Our classic period had also the continuity and the specious unity of… a long lifetime," says Fisch. "Not only were all its major figures born before the period began [in 1868]… but two are still living and writing." [Fisch published in 1951; Dewey and Santayana both died in 1952]. Around page six, Fisch begins to tell his tale "by setting down some of the more informal comments expressed in the letters of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., who, though an active participant in the early formulation of pragmatism, felt himself thereafter a detached but interested observer of the philosophic scene" (5,6).

(B) The Climate of Opinion (pp. 9-19)

Here Fisch covers "the difference that science made" between the worldviews of Holmes Jr. (author and Supreme Court Justice) and Sr. (author and physician). "By far the most influential single idea was that of evolution" (10). Aiding this notion were "…the sciences of man and society that arose in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: anthropology (physical and cultural), social psychology, comparative religion and folklore, …economics, 'the new history' and 'the sociology of knowledge'" (11). We hear about Darwin… Chauncey Wright, "a leading philosophic interpreter and defender of Darwinian theory" (12)… Alexander Bain… "the prediction theory of law" of Justice Holmes; and at page seventeen Fisch suggests that "Readers new to philosophy" might want to postpone the rest of his General Introduction, and start reading the selections from or the introductions to the six philosophers.

(C) Major Themes and Tendencies (pp. 19-39)

Let me just list the fourteen headings used by Fisch. If you are already well-informed about each of these issues, it may be that there is no need for you to read any further; but most of us, I suspect, will find fresh ideas and thoughtfully-assembled evidence in these pages.

1. The Damnation of Descartes
2. The Naturalizing of Mind
3. The Mentalizing of Nature
4. From Substance to Process
5. The Obsolescence of the Eternal
6. The Reduction of Yesterday to Tomorrow
7. Purpose in Thought
8. Exit the Spectator
9. The Theory of Signs
10. Laboratory vs. Seminary Philosophy

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1. Max H. Fisch, *Classic American Philosophers*, (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1951; rpt. 1996, with an "Introduction" by Nathan Houser, by Fordham UP), v. Taken from the "Preface"; Descartes-Leibnitz phrase added from the "Introduction." Dates and formatting added.
2. Fisch, 1.

11. Science as Cooperative Inquiry
12. The Supremacy of Method
13. Science and Society
14. The Great Community

Oof! Even if my attempted summary, necessarily over-brief, points to a powerful document… it makes for dry reading. We've talked about James in 1880; Whitehead in 1936 (he'd just finished reading Ralph Barton Perry's two-volume biography *The Thought and Character of William James* (1935), and found it "just like the Dialogues of Plato…"); and Fisch in 1951. To bring the story forward, here are Stanley Cavell as a reader of two cross-fertilizing geniuses, Emerson and Thoreau; and John E. Smith as a reader of another such pair, James and Peirce.

Two Readers, Two Tag-Teams

My first acquaintance with Stanley Cavell came from reading his essay "Thinking of Emerson," which Russell B. Goodman included in his excellent anthology *Pragmatism: A Contemporary Reader.* The two sentences that caught my attention come at the beginning:

1978 • "Thinking of Emerson, I can think of my book on *Walden* as something of an embarrassment, but something of an encouragement as well, since if what it suggests about the lack of a tradition of thinking in America is right, e.g., about how Emerson and Thoreau deaden one another's words, then my concentration on understanding Thoreau was bound to leave Emerson out. He kept sounding to me like secondhand Thoreau" (Cavell, in Goodman, ed. 298).

Hmm. What a colorful way to describe two writers, two thinkers—working pretty much the same territory, but from complementary perspectives, so that each occupies the wake, or the shadow, marked out by the omissions of the other. Who else, do you suppose… what other pairs or small groups of writers have a similar pattern of dovetailed interests… such a rich cross-fertilization of ideas, lectures, books? Of course, I can't help thinking of America's Plato and Aristotle, William James and Charles Peirce.

How do I describe the tacit division of labor that James and Peirce enacted in their lifetimes, and still carry on, in many ways? William was always a people's philosopher, quite willing to acknowledge the insights he had learned by listening to "an unlettered carpenter of my acquaintance" (*WB* 256). Charles was always a philosopher's philosopher, strengthening the toolkit of professional thinkers in ways they would (eventually) recognize— even if his radical revisions were so far ahead of his time that many of his otherwise intelligent colleagues could not decipher exactly what he was driving at.

This list of contrasts could go on, but my point is that in many ways, they operated as a tag-team. Like Emerson and Thoreau, they covered more ground, or covered it more thoroughly, than either could have done working alone. That point is made much more specifically by John E. Smith in his recent book *America's Philosophic Vision.* In Chapter Three, "Two Defenses of Freedom: Peirce and James," Smith sets up his thesis with these words from his headnote:

1992 • "James's 'The Dilemma of Determinism' and Peirce's 'The Doctrine of Necessity Examined' are noteworthy in that they represent a striking contrast in approach while essentially arguing for the same conclusion. Both thinkers are defending real possibilities, spontaneity and chance in the scheme of things, but whereas James uses the dilemma to force the determinist to confront two undesirable consequences of the view, Peirce proceeds directly to examine and ultimately reject six reasons that have been advanced in support of determinism. The approach in each case is characteristic of their mode of thinking, something that James would have put down to 'temperament'" (Smith 53).

Towards the end of his essay, Smith concludes:

> I suppose that in the end the contrast in the approach of these two thinkers should not be at all surprising. Peirce made a considerable investment in logic, while James was repeatedly affirming the belief that where logic and life collide, it is so much the worse for logic. Their orientations, moreover, are decisively different; Peirce's is cosmological and ontological, while James's is clearly anthropological. Peirce thinks from a theoretical distance and addresses himself to the rational public; James speaks from within and to the total experience of the individual person…. I see no reason, especially in connection with problems like that of freedom, why both approaches may not be legitimate…(69-70).

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Of course there are other groupings in which James can be considered. To cite only three:

EXISTENTIAL

1958 • According to William Barrett, writing in *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy* (1958), "Of all the non-European philosophers, William James probably best deserves to be labeled an Existentialist" (p. 18). [It was this hint, by the way, which led me to choose WJ as a dissertation topic… but that's another story.]

CONTINENTAL

1971 • Along similar lines, when Bruce Wilshire edited an anthology titled *William James: The Essential Writings* (1971), his "Introduction" ran to 49 pages and noted that "the faulty recognition of James" comes in part from the unexpected intellectual company that WJ keeps. "Through a reading of such European thinkers as Husserl, Bergson, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Wittgenstein," writes Wilshire, "we are, somewhat ironically, helped to capture the centered vision of the American philosopher" (p. xviii).

PROCESS PHILOSOPHY

1992 • And finally, Nicholas Rescher maintains, in his essay on "The Promise of Process Philosophy," that "As Whitehead himself thus emphasized, process philosophy does not represent the doctrines of a particular thinker, but reflects a major tendency or line of thought that traces back through the history of philosophy to the days of the pre–Socratics. Its leading exponents were Heracleitus, Leibnitz, Bergson, Peirce, and William James, and it ultimately moved on to include Whitehead and his school (Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, as well as Andrew Paul Ushenko), and also others such as Samuel Alexander and C. Lloyd Morgan" (Rescher 75).

• • •

But you can't read everything; so for me the next step (beyond reading about James himself) has been reading about his close friend Charles Peirce. For one thing, I find the recently updated biography of Peirce by Joseph Brent an excellent book and a good read, with much in it for fans of WJ to ponder. Highly recommended. For another thing, I have an especial respect for the scholarship of the late Max Fisch (1900-1995). I only met and chatted with Professor Fisch a few times, but he was always gracious and charming.

Not only did Fisch virtually invent Classic American Philosophy as a field of study; he has done more than any other scholar to retrieve the written legacy of Charles Peirce. I only became aware of this project in 1974 or '75, when my studies in the James Papers at the Houghton Library were enlivened by the regular Parade of the Texas Peirceans, led by Professor Fisch. He knew of me through his friend Ed Davidson, my dissertation advisor; and after a few words were exchanged, we managed a way to chat outside the hushed confines of the library.

Best of all was an afternoon gathering for wine and cheese, sort of a scholars' TGIF, to which Max Fisch invited both me and another Jamesian, Ignas K. Skrupskelis. I was and remain largely a neophyte in philosophy; my Ph.D. (1973) is in English, and my interest in William James is biographical. I fondly thought of this "Peirceans meeting Jamesians" event as an homage to the Metaphysical Club of the 1870s, as well as a continuation of the kind of "community of scholars" that both James and Peirce believed in. I got to ask Max himself about his research interests, and to hear about his early work with Vico, and his current work both as the designated Peirce biographer and as the lead investigator in what has become The Peirce Edition Project. His answers let me know that the Peirce Edition, to his mind, had to take precedence over the biography. Then he turned the tables on me.

"You have asked 'Why Peirce?'" he said. "Now maybe you can explain: 'Why James?'" I like to think that now, some twenty-five years later, I could give a better answer than the one I fumbled through then. Certainly Fisch was not impressed—he reminded me, as I vaguely recall, of James's shortcomings as a systematic thinker: the popular tone, the diversity of projects (some unfinished), the aversion to logic…. I tried to say something about "enough data-points to mark out a fairly definite curve," but I knew I was in over my head. Max smiled.

Let me include here a story that points to the interrelatedness of the philosophical work done by James and Peirce. The kinship and connectedness that I have in mind runs far deeper than the surface frictions that may take place between two thinkers. Charles Peirce was less than happy about a gesture of praise from William James, when James mailed him a pre-publication copy. I'm referring to WJ's "Appendix C: On the Notion of Reality as Changing," which he attached to *A Pluralistic Universe*, the book publication of his 1908 Hibbert Lectures at Oxford. This led to an exchange of letters that reveals both the surface friction and the deeper cooperation between two thinkers with differing temperaments.

1909 • Appendix C, excerpt:

"Volumes i, ii, and iii of the *Monist* (1890-93) contain a number of articles by Mr. Charles S. Peirce, articles the originality of which has apparently prevented their making an immediate impression, but which, if I mistake not, will prove a gold mine of ideas for thinkers of the coming generation. Mr. Peirce's views, though reached so differently, are altogether congruous with Bergson's. Both philosophers believe that the appearance of novelty in things is genuine…. Peirce's 'tychism' is thus practically synonymous with Bergson's 'devenir réel'."[James *Essays / Pluralistic* 283]

CSP to WJ, March 9, 1909:

[Peirce studied the proof sheets James had sent him (about 4 pp. in print); found several "points of

logic" to discuss…] "and when I had filled forty sheets [in reply] and when I was going on to the forty-first, I concluded that the matter would not interest you….

"I thought your *Will to Believe* was a very exaggerated utterance, such as injures a serious man very much, but to say what you now do is far more suicidal. I have lain awake several nights in succession in grief that you should be so careless of what you say…. [I]t is not very grateful to my feelings to be classed along with a Bergson who seems to be doing his prettiest to muddle all distinctions…."

WJ to CSP, March 10, 1909:

"Before whom have I cast that pearl of an Appendix? I imagined it to be in the purest spirit of your synechistic tychism, and I think still that my only mistake was in sending it to you without the whole text that introduced and justified it.… Forty sheets! Lord help us!…"

Now if I were a Compleat Jamesian, as I someday hope to be, I could show you just how Peirce's ideas dovetail nicely with those of Bergson; and how both sets of ideas fit into and help to fulfill the Pluralistic Universe of James. But that day is not yet. Let me conclude with a simple anecdote, and an intriguing project by a recent French philosopher who was a disciple (in a sense) of both Bergson and Peirce. As you may know, both James and Peirce participated, off and on, in an informal study group in Cambridge called the Metaphysical Club. No dues were collected, no officers were elected, and the club was forbidden to take any stand on any issue. Here's "an account by one of James's students, reported by Fisch," to suggest what went on:

> In conversation James told of a philosophical club of which Chauncey Wright, John Fiske and others were members, at which Peirce was to read a paper. They assembled; Peirce did not come; they waited and waited; finally a two-horse carriage came along and Peirce got out with a dark cloak over him; he came in and began to read his paper. What was it about? He set forth, James said, how the different moments of time got into the habit of coming one after another [for Peirce, all regularity is the result of taking habits]. (Brent, p. 86)

In his list of fourteen "Major Themes and Tendencies" which characterize "The Classic Period in American Philosophy," Fisch takes up as #5 "The Obsolescence of the Eternal." In discussing "The shift from eternalism to temporalism, the cult of 'taking time seriously,'" Fisch points out that "As there are no immutable species since Darwin, so there are no eternal laws of nature since Peirce and Whitehead" (Fisch, *Classic*, p. 23).

Despite his reluctance to be "classed along with Bergson," then, Peirce did share with James's French friend and correspondent, a strong interest in "taking time seriously." Bergson's first book was titled *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (1889). Bergson always insisted on a sharp distinction between time-as-experienced, or *duration*, and time as a concept, or mere "clock time." If "taking time seriously" is indeed a cult, it is a big one; along with the six American philosophers and Henri Bergson, one would have to include Martin Heidegger, who became a major figure following the publication of his big book: *Being and Time* (1927).

And finally, what about movies, arguably the major art-form of our own times. Aren't movies—American, European, Asian, all movies—largely about time? That's what French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) contends. Among his last publications are two books about the theory, the philosophy, of movies: *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (1986), and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1989). Now Deleuze had been from the first a close student of the writings of Bergson. His first book was titled *Bergsonism* (1966). As his translator explains, "For Deleuze, Bergson forms part of a 'counter history' of philosophy. He was a writer like Lucretius, Spinoza, Hume or Nietzsche 'who seemed to be part of the history of philosophy, but who escaped from it in one respect or altogether'" (Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 7).

So much for Bergson, but what about Peirce? In the author's "Preface to the French Edition" of *Cinema 1* we read:

"We will frequently be referring to the American logician Peirce (1839-1914), because he established a general classification of images and signs, which is undoubtedly the most complete and the most varied. It can be compared with Linnaeus's classifications in natural history, or even more with Mendeleev's table in chemistry" (Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. xiv). Every college or even high school student who has ever taken chemistry can recall the large "Periodic Table of the Elements" that decorated laboratory walls and science textbooks. If film study can match or exceed the interest of students in chemistry, we may soon see comparable charts mapping Peirce's triad of categories—Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness—against several of his other triadic classifications of signs.

I would be lying if I pretended to understand all this. But even to browse in these two books, or to scan their tables of contents, shows how thoroughly Deleuze has intermixed the ideas of Bergson with those of Peirce. Besides: Deleuze must have enjoyed years and years of movie-going to have at his fingertips all the best films by all the best directors—which he certainly makes generous use of in the pages of these

two books. If you manage to rent and view—or find on cable—most of the films mentioned, it will constitute almost a second liberal education; or at least a thoroughgoing acquaintance with enough films, directors, cameramen, critics and the rest to form a world all its own.

There are worse ways to spend one's time: looking at the close-ups in Bergman films to see how they reflect "Firstness" according to Peirce; studying "Secondness" as reflected in large action films like John Ford's Westerns, or the the historical films of Griffith and Cecil B. DeMille; and watching the movies of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton to see "Secondness" demonstrated in smaller forms. As for "Thirdness," you will need to seek it in the movies of the Marx Brothers… and Alfred Hitchcock… and directors like Lumet, Cassavetes, and Altman. And this is just the tip of the iceberg, without even touching on the larger book, *Cinema 2*.

• • •

In Conclusion:

If Peirce were alive today, I suspect he would be pleased to see his classification of signs "compared with Linnaeus's classifications in natural history, or even more with Mendeleev's table in chemistry," as Deleuze puts it. Since Peirce's first paper on classification, "On a New List of Categories," was published in 1867, his work predates that of Dmitry Mendeleev, who published his periodic table of the elements in 1869. Peirce might even be willing to admit that James was not entirely wrong in seeing a possible connection between Bergson's work and his own.

There are aspects of Plato's thinking that don't come fully into focus until you have read some Aristotle, and vice-versa; and similarly: you can't fully understand William James until you have read some Charles Peirce, and vice-versa. James had a gift for reaching the general public, both as listeners and as readers; Peirce made it his priority to fill in fully the systematic technicalities which specialists in philosophy require. James rounded up a large audience, which he tried to share with Peirce; Peirce, as we have seen, fussed at James for not minding his logical P's and Q's.

But over the long haul they trusted one another, and often they worked along parallel lines. After James published his talk on "Great Men and Their Environment" in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Peirce took up an extended study of Great Men, working with volunteers from among his students at Johns Hopkins to see whether great scientists and philosophers could be classified according to his categories of First, Second, Third (see Brent, p. 368). If I may borrow from Hilary Putnam a pair of terms which he uses to distinguish between the Continental (philosophers of vision) and the Anglo-American or Analytical (philosophers of argument) schools of thought, I would say that James, like Plato, was a philosopher of vision; Peirce, like Aristotle, a philosopher of argument. Both are essential.[3]

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3. See Conant's "Introduction" to Putnam's *Realism With a Human Face*, fn. 42, p. xxxi; and *passim*.

Concrete Possibilities: William James and the European Avant-Garde

by Eliza Jane Reilly

> In between these two abstractions—provincialism and cosmopolitanism—spans a field of concrete possibilities.
>
> —David Hollinger, 1985[1]

In the teens and twenties pragmatism had become, in Henry Steele Commager's words "almost the official philosophy of America." At the same time it had become the target of a vigorous backlash on the part of art and cultural critics, who considered it a major philosophic barrier to the development of a native high-culture that could rival the dignity and depth of that offered by Europe.[2] In 1913 the prominent art critic, James Huenecker, lambasted pragmatism as "A Philosophy for Philistines," while Van Wyck Brooks in 1917 claimed that pragmatism's insistence on the utility of thought—its notion that our truths and values should be judged by how well they "worked" in the world— had allowed science "to usurp the place that poetry alone can fill adequately." Even worse, Brooks insisted, was pragmatism's proposal that consciousness, or human subjectivity, was a product of social and material relations, and not autonomous. Pragmatism's denial of that subjective autonomy made it incapable of formulating "the aims of life and the values by which those aims are tested...which…can be effectively formulated only by individual minds NOT in harmony with the existing fact, but in revolt against it."[3]

Lewis Mumford offered the most comprehensive and damning assessment of pragmatism in *The Golden Day* of 1926:

> The Gilded Age tarnished quickly; culture could not flourish in that environment. Those who could not accept their external milieu fled abroad, like Henry James. As for those who remained, perhaps the most significant of all was William James. He gave this attitude of compromise and acquiescence a name; he called it pragmatism: and the name stands not merely for his own philosophy, but for something in which that philosophy was deeply if unconsciously entangled, the spirit of a whole age.

In Mumford's view, Jamesian pragmatism was nothing but "the animus of the pioneer, translated into dialectic," a "warming over again in philosophy the hash of everyday experience in the Gilded Age." He dismissed it as not only passé, but hopelessly provincial and anti-intellectual, forcing cultivated and creative Americans to flee abroad.[4]

Brooks, Mumford, and the other "Young American" cultural critics of the period were convinced that only the Europe of William Morris, Goethe, Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx could offer the aesthetic values upon which American culture could be renewed.[5] But what did American intellectuals find when they fled an intellectually bankrupt America, so saturated with crude, utilitarian attitudes, for Europe? In fact, we now know that those forward-looking, art-minded Americans who made the pilgrimage to England, France, Italy, Germany, or even Russia, found a literary and artistic intelligentsia deeply engaged with that same pernicious American philosophy that had presumably turned the United States into an aesthetic wasteland. James was, in fact, more widely known, and his ideas more attended to, in Europe than in the United States, prompting his Harvard colleague George Santayana to observe at his death: "Until the return wave of James' reputation reached America from Europe, his pupils and friends were hardly aware that he was such a distinguished man."[6]

In England, where his brother Henry presumably found refuge from the corrosive effects of his philosophy, we find that William James was a veritable fixture in British philosophical and intellectual circles by the early 1880's. It was to his British colleagues that James presented and debated the key concepts that would constitute his *Principles of Psychology,* many of which were first presented to the reading public in the London periodical *Mind.* These include "The Sentiment of Rationality" (1879), "On Some Omissions of Introspective Psychology" (1884), which is the first formulation of the theory of the stream of consciousness, "What is an Emotion" (1884), which introduced the famous "James-Lange" theory, and "On the Function of Cognition"

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1. David Hollinger, "Preface," *In the American Province: Studies in the History and Historiography of Ideas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), ix.
2. Henry Steele Commager, *The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 97.
3. James G. Huenecker, "A Philosophy for Philistines," in *The Pathos of Distance* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913); Van Wyck Brooks, "Our Awakeners," *Seven Arts* 2 (June 1917), 235-248.
4. Lewis Mumford, "The Pragmatic Acquiescence," *In The Golden Day: A Study in American Culture and Experience* (New York: Horace Liveright, 1926), reprinted in Gail Kennedy, ed. *Pragmatism and American Culture* (Boston: D.C. Heath and Co., 1950), 39ff.
5. For the Eurocentric convictions of the "Young American" cultural critics of the teens and twenties, see Casey Nelson Blake, *Beloved Community: The Cultural Criticism of Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, and Lewis Mumford* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 158-163.

(1885), which James regarded as "the *fons et origo* of all my pragmatism." It is also important to note that James was deeply enmeshed in another, somewhat less mainstream intellectual community, one engaged in psychical research and the reconciliation of mysticism and science. As a close friend and colleague of Britain's leading psychical researchers, G.R.S. Mead and F.W.H. Myers, James maintained life-long memberships in the organizations they led, The British Society for Psychical Research, and the Quest Society, and served as vice president of the American branch of the former organization for over eighteen years.[7]

After the publication of *Principles of Psychology*, James continued to develop the precepts of pragmatism in a British intellectual context, presenting portions of *Varieties of Religious Experience* at the University of Edinburgh, and *A Pluralistic Universe* at Manchester College in Oxford, as part of a series of celebrated and heavily attended lectures in May of 1908.[8] Apparently, James's fame was equally great outside of the academy, as he was known to socialize with luminaries from the British modernist circles, including William Butler Yeats, Roger Fry, Ottoline Morrell, Bernard Berenson, H. G. Wells, and G. K. Chesterton.[9] William's own brother Henry, who was singled out by both Mumford and Brooks for his rejection and critique of American culture, apparently did not agree that pragmatism was either anti-intellectual or a solvent of creative identity. Writing to his brother in 1909: "As an artist and a 'creator' I can catch on, hold on, to pragmatism and can work in the light of it and apply it; finding, in comparison, everything else….utterly irrelevant and useless."[10]

In Italy, James's work had attracted the attention of the philosophic community as early as the late 1890's, but when the editors of *Leonardo*, a leading avant-garde periodical, founded the Florentine Pragmatic Club in 1904, a full-blown Italian pragmatist movement emerged, headed by Giovanni Papini, Giuseppe Prezzolini, and Giovanni Vailati.[11] Although the work of William James was their focus, the Italians carried on a broad-based engagement with pragmatism, exploring the writings of C.S. Pierce, John Dewey, and the British pragmatist Ferdinand Canning Schiller, and turning *Leonardo* into "Italy's authoritative pragmatist organ" between 1904 and 1907.[12] James met his Florentine followers personally in 1905 at the Fifth International Congress of Psychology in Rome, and their ensuing relationship, and particularly the mutual admiration that evolved between James and Papini, became a shaping force, not only for Italian pragmatism, but for the evolution of James's own ideas. In turn, James introduced the Italians and their movement to the English- speaking world in a 1906 article in *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods.*[13]

It is clear from James's letters and from his article on the movement, that the "reading" that Italians had given to his work had had an immediate and significant impact on his own comprehension of pragmatism. Tracing the reception and adaptation of his work within the Italian intellectual context had revealed to him, as James put it, "how truth ought to find its way in the world." [14] Additionally, Papini's understanding of pragmatism as a collection of neutral attitudes and methods that function "like a corridor in a hotel from which a hundred doors open into a hundred chambers," became a central metaphor of pragmatism for James. Despite acknowledging the "extravagance," and even the "carelessness," of their version of pragmatism, James greatly appreciated the Italian aestheticization of the doctrine, and their understanding of pragmatism as a spur to all human creativity through which art, science, religion, and philosophy could be made over.[15]

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6. George Santayana, *Character and Opinion in the United States* (New York: Scribners, 1920), 94. See also Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James* (Briefer Version) (New York: Harper and Row, 1948), for an overview of James's European connections and affiliations, and Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller, "Pragmatism," *Encyclopedia Britannica,* 13th ed. (New York and London: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc, 1926), for an assessment, from a European perspective, of pragmatism's growing international acceptance as a philosophy and theory of truth in the decade and a half after James's death. An informal survey of works published on pragmatism or on William James's philosophy between 1900 and 1925 confirms the fact that European interest was very high in this period. Considerably more than half of the books on the subject catalogued by the New York Public Library were published outside the United States, with England, Germany, Italy and France showing the most activity. There are also works in Spanish, Polish and Dutch. Interestingly, *Principles of Psychology* was available in Russian translation as early as 1905, before Italian, French, or German translations appeared.

7. For James's British publications and professional contacts, see Perry, *Thought and Character,* 205, and Patricia Rae, "From Mystical Gaze to Pragmatic Game: Representations of Truth in Vorticist Art," *ELH* (Fall 1989), 716, fn. 16.

8. Horace M. Kallen, "James, William," *Encyclopedia Britannica* (London and New York: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1954). The Hibbert Lectures move impressed even the critics of pragmatism; in 1913 Emile Durkheim noted that James "was bold enough to go to Oxford, the citadel of Hegelianism, to expound his doctrine, presenting it in a perspective that most strikingly brought out its contrast with Hegelian thought." Emile Durkheim, *Pragmatism and Sociology,* trans. J.C. Whitehouse, edited and introduced by John B. Allcock (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 8. The tone and response of the Hibbert Lectures are described in Linda Simon, *Genuine Reality: A Life of William James* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) 356-58.

9. Simon, 359-61.

10. Perry, *Thought and Character,* 336.

11. James himself brought this movement to the attention of the English speaking world: William James, "G. Papini and the Pragmatist Movement in Italy," *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* III (June 21, 1906), 337-341.

12. Marianne W. Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1968), 21-22.

It is significant that in Italy pragmatism's locus was a non-academic avant-garde and not the philosophic community—though trained philosophers were attached to the movement—and the key players gradually became more and more involved with explicitly aesthetic issues. After they disbanded *Leonardo*, Prezzolini and Papini founded a new journal, *La Voce*, that fused art and literary criticism with cultural, sociological, and political analysis, a cross-disciplinary approach to Italian cultural renewal that made Florence Italy's intellectual capital between 1904-1913. [16]

American intellectuals travelling to France between 1880 and 1914 would not have been able to escape pragmatism either. One might say that France "discovered" James as a philosopher, as his first explicitly philosophical piece appeared in the French journal *Critique Philosophique* in 1878, and many of his key articles of the 1880's and 90's, where he introduced the key concepts of pragmatism and radical empiricism, were translated for publication in that journal.[17] According to analysts of French intellectual life in this period, the penetration and spread of pragmatic ideas was rapid and unprecedented for a non-French body of thought. No doubt his reputation in France was bolstered by fact that James was considered a major intellectual innovator by some of the most powerful and respected individuals in the French philosophical world, including Charles Renouvier, Henri Bergson, and Emile Boutroux.[18]

Because of these alliances, pragmatism and French voluntarism (or the "spiritualistic activism" represented by Renouvier, Boutroux, and Bergson,) were considered two strands of a single philosophic school, both within philosophic community, and in the mind of the reading public. Consequently, the French reception of both tended to emphasize their anti-rationalist commonalities, than their serious differences. But it also meant that pragmatism was carried along on the coattails of Henri Bergson's enormous popularity. By 1913, pragmatism was so popular in France that no less a personage than Emile Durkheim of the Sorbonne considered it both an intellectual AND a national menace— a threat to the characteristic rationalism of French thought—leading him to devote the entire year 1913-14 academic year to an extended critique of its claims. Interestingly, Durkheim's complaint about pragmatism, that it dangerously anti-rational, was precisely the opposite of the American critique, which was that pragmatism was overly scientific.[19]

So it seems safe to conclude that American cultural critics of the teens and twenties were wrong about pragmatism's provincialism, though they were correct about its Americanism. For James, as his student Horace Kallen noted, "is in the most intimate and specific way…THE philosopher of America." At the same time, his philosophy belonged to no national school. Europeans apparently believed that James's work was as much "theirs" as as it was "ours."[20]

The American critics were also wrong about pragmatism's congeniality to aesthetic innovation. In Italy and England it is relatively easy to identify the multiple points of contact between the philosophic communities and the avant-garde movements of Futurism and Vorticism. In Italy the Florentine pragmatist movement and Futurism were literally merged in 1913, their fusion embodied in the journal *Lacerba*, which was edited by Papini and functioned as the official Futurist periodical.[21] In England the young poets and artists who would later found Vorticism, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis and T.E. Hulme, had numerous engagements with James's work through their regular attendance at The Quest Society, where James was not only a member, but a frequent contributor to the society's journal.[22]

Demonstrating a link between William James and the French avant-garde is a much more complicated

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13. An overview of James's influence and activity in Italy is offered by Gerald E. Meyers, "The Influence of William James's Pragmatism in Italy," in Tuttleton and Lombardo, eds., *The Sweetest Impression of Life: The James Family in Italy* (New York: New York University Press, 1990). See also Perry, 313-320; Giovanni Papini, *The Failure* (Un uomo finito) (1913) (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1924), 204-5; Claudio Gorlier, "Listening to the Master: William James and the 'Making of the New' in Italian Culture," in *The Sweetest Impression of Life*, 184.

14. James quoted in a letter to his wife Alice reporting on his first encounter with the Florentine pragmatists in 1905, Perry, Thought and Character, 313.

15. Ibid.

16. For the significance of *La Voce* to Italian Modernism see Martin, 21-22, and Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozolla, *Futurism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 29.

17. Ralph Barton Perry, "Annotated Bibliography of the Writings of William James," in McDermott, ed. *The Writings of William James,* (New York: Modern Library, 1968), 817. Perry adds that the highly appreciative note from Renouvier indicates that James was, even by this early date, known abroad more as a philosopher than as a psychologist. James had published an article on Renouvier, for whom he expressed very high regard, in 1876 in *The Nation*, (June 6), 367-369. For the James-Renouvier relationship, see Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*,153, and Kallen, "James, William," *Encyclopedia Britannica,* who identify James's reading of Renouvier in 1870 as a turning point in his intellectual and personal life, and perhaps the greatest individual influence on his thought. James dedicated his last work, *Some Problems of Philosophy* (published posthumously in 1911), to the memory of Renouvier.

18. For the reception and rapid spread of James's ideas in France, see the Introduction to Emile Durkheim, *Pragmatism and Sociology,* trans. J.C. Whitehouse, edited and introduced by John B. Allcock (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

19. In the preface to the 1955 edition of Durkheim's *Pragmatisme et Sociologie,*
Armand Cuvillier identified Durkheim's central argument with pragmatism as centering on its conflation of experience and values, and its refusal to uphold the "fundamental dualism between the individual and the social." Re-printed in Durkheim, *Pragmatism and Sociology* (Cambridge, 1983), xxii.

proposition. Because of its undeniable formalism, the central avant-garde art movement of early twentieth century France, Cubism, has traditionally been interpreted as a rigorously Kantian enterprise, committed to the separation of painting from all extraneous influences, including recognizable subject matter.[23] It is also the case that while Cubism became an identifiable movement with many participants, by 1911 or 1912, it begins with the insight of a single individual, Pablo Picasso. His work of 1906-7, *Les Desmoiselles D'Avignon*, marks the beginning of a pictorial revolution that art and intellectual historians agree is rivaled only by the discovery of perspective in the Renaissance.

Figure 1

Picasso, unlike the young intellectuals who founded Futurism and Vorticism in the following decade, was not known to attend lectures, or otherwise engage with the philosophical community. His primary preoccupation, and the medium through which he expressed all of his other interests, including his politics, was painting. On the other hand, we do know that during most of 1905 Picasso spent nearly every day deep in conversation with one of William James's favorite students, Gertrude Stein. The closeness and intensity of the Stein/Picasso relationship in the pivotal years of Cubist innovation, 1907-1911, has been heavily documented.[24] But only recently has anyone suggested that one of the things they may have discussed is the work of William James. In 1982 art historian Marianne Teuber argued quite persuasively that James's psychology and emerging philosophy of pragmatism, with which Stein was very familiar, was a major topic of discussion during the period that Picasso was working on *Les Desmoiselles D'Avignon.*[25] The fact that the work was originally dubbed *The Philosophical Brothel* lends credence to the idea that it has its origins in such conversations.[26] We also know that Stein frequently lent copies of James's work to visitors to the apartment she shared with her brother Leo, who was another former student and avowed disciple of William James.

Teuber's long and detailed argument is supported by an avalanche of circumstantial and contextual evidence regarding Picasso's interest in the "new psychology," including his undoubted familiarity with the related theories of Henri Bergson. But the core of the argument is visual evidence, much of which is derived, from the material in Chapter 20 of *Principles of Psychology,* "The Perception of Space," which is the longest single chapter in the entire work.[27]

In this chapter there is a heavily illustrated section on illusions in which James singles out one category of optical illusion, a very familiar and common one, as being more significant than others. This type is represented by what James calls "the bent visiting card," or variations on the reversible cube.

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20. Horace Kallen, "William James," *Dial* (August 30, 1917)142. John Dewey, in an obituary essay in the *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Method*, made a point of emphasizing James's fame in Europe, his honorary degrees from Italy, Switzerland, England, and his "membership in the academy of almost every European country." John Dewey, "William James," *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods,* vol. VII, no. 19 (September 15, 1910), 505-508.

21. Tisdall and Bozzolla, 165-167.

22. For the extensive influence of James on the artists of the Vorticist movement, see Patricia Rae, *The Practical Muse: Pragmatist Poetics in Hulme, Pound, and Stevens* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1997).

23. The link between Cubism and Kantian theory is cited often by art critics and historians. The most comprehensive treatment is Christopher Gray, *Cubist Aesthetic Theories* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1953).

24. Their relationship was clearly extraordinarily close, especially during the years of Cubist innovation, as is recorded in Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933) (New York: Vintage Books, 1990) and her monograph Picasso (1938) (New York: Dover Publications, 1984). See also Pierre Daix, *Picasso, Life and Art,* trans. Olivia Emmet (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 53ff; See also Patrick O'Brian, *Picasso: A Biography* (1976) (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1997); Roland Penrose, *Picasso: His Life and Work,* third edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). O'Brian writes of the period following1905: "their intimacy increased and with it their mutual esteem…they remained unusually close to one another for many years." Picasso, 140.

25. Marianne Teuber, "Formvorstellung Und Kubismus Oder Pablo Picasso Und William James," *Kubismus*, ed. S. Gohr (Koln: Josef-Haubrich Kunstalle, 1982), 9-57.

26. Andre Salmon refers to Desmoiselles as "Le Bordel Philosophique" in *La Jeune Peinture Française* (Paris,1912). It did not acquire its present name until after World War I when it was purchased by M. Jaques Doucet. See John Golding, *Cubism, A History and An Analysis* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968) 50, fn. 2.

27. William James, *The Principles of Psychology,* 2 vols. (New York: Dover Publications, 1962).

Figure 2

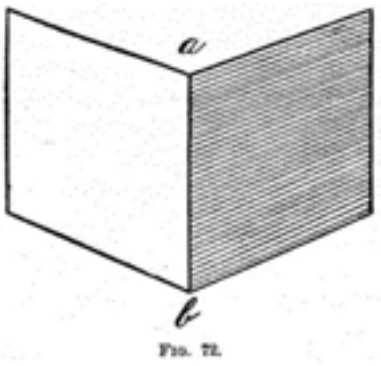
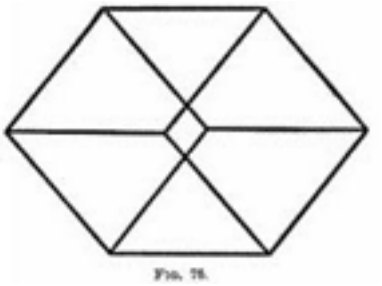


Figure 3



When viewed with one eye, then the other, or if we reposition one of these images above or below eye-level, our perception of them changes. The card is either bent toward us, or away from us, the glass or the cube recede or project into space, so that a single image, or sign, as he refers to these illusions, can represent two different objects:

> Whichever of these objects we conceive clearly at the moment of looking at the figure, we seem to *see* in all its solidity before us. A little practice will enable us to flap the fixtures, so to speak, backwards and forwards from one object to the other at will (p. 257)

The point of this exercise for James is to demonstrate how a single object can be read as having multiple identities, depending on subjective factors in the viewer, like angle of observation, expectation, and habit. In other words, these images reveal to us our tendency to understand what we *see* in terms of what we *know*. They can be read, then, as a visual rendering of the pragmatic theory of truth, the idea that the meanings we select from our perceptions are determined by our positions, our interests, our history.

Teuber points out that Picasso uses these particular, commonplace optical illusions—the bent card and the reversible cube—in an almost obsessive way between 1908-1909, as is evident in the following illustrations:

Figure 4

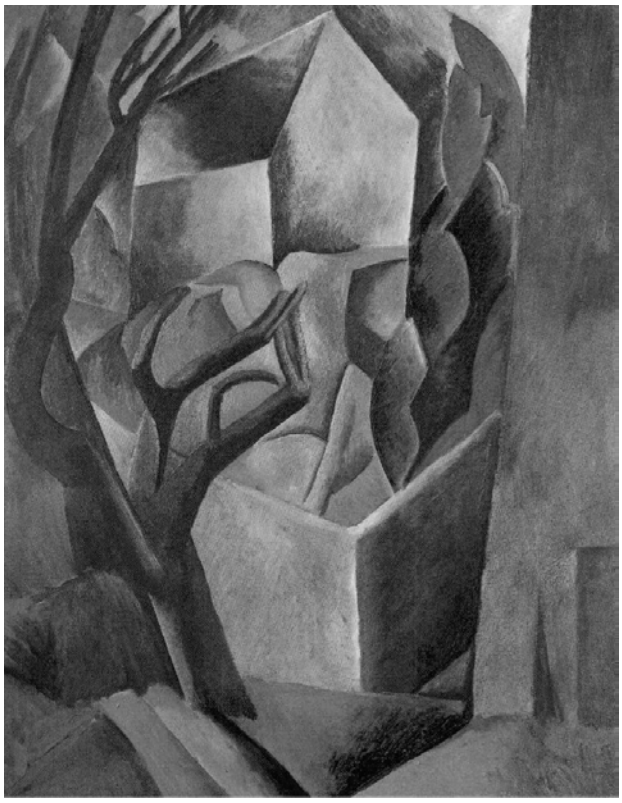


Figure 5

Figure 6

Indeed, it is hard to miss the degree to which Picasso used the visiting card motif, either bent or flat, in his work. In fact, while he used the visiting card in its capacity as an illusion in the works of 1908-10, he later used it in a literal sense, painting the actual visiting card of his friend, Miss Gertrude Stein, into such works as the *Architects Table* of 1912, and incorporated her real visiting card, appropriately bent, in a collage *Still Life with Visiting Card* of 1914, suggesting that it may have been a kind of private joke between them.

Figure 7

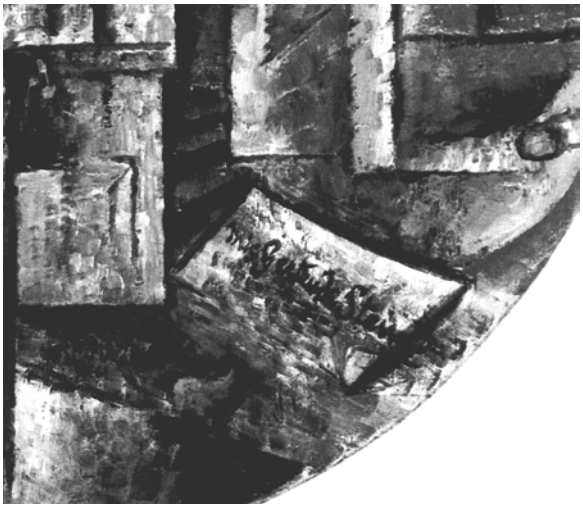
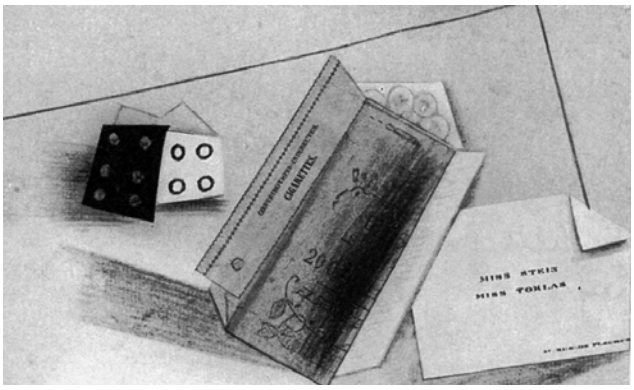


Figure 8



Picasso's heavy emphasis on the reversible cube during these early years has been noted by other art historians as well. Last year art historian T.J. Clark, in one of the most detailed and convincing analyses of early Cubism ever written, identified the use of this specific illusion during the 1908-1910 period as the key to understanding all of Picasso's Cubist work.[28] Despite the metaphysical and metaphorical interpretations that have long dominated the scholarship of Cubism, Clark maintains that Picasso meant it when he described his early Cubist work as "a horridly materialistic affair, a base kind of materialism."[29] Cubism ultimately, in Clark's opinion, "comes down…to the issue of illusionism" and Picasso's exploration of illusionism's deep structures, the procedures that lay at its root. According to Clark, ""the governing figure of Picasso's work" in this period is "that hard-edged, spot-lit, reversible cube that migrates through so many of these pictures and finally, in *Woman with Pears* (Figure 6) gets affixed at the point of maximum salience—becomes that salience, so to speak." [30] Clark believes Picasso chooses the reversible cube to be the central figure of his exploration:

> ...because it conjures back so vividly one of the high moments of Western illusionism—the Piero moment (a reference to Renaissance master Piero Della Francesca) —and reminds of the reflexive quality of that previous tradition, its admission of paradox even at the height of its powers. (198)

But while the cube's convexity represents "maximum salience," or "presence with a vengeance," its simultaneous concavity represents the absence of presence—or saliences's negative terms—ambiance,

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28. T.J. Clark, "Cubism and Collectivity," in *Farewell to an Idea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999)169-223.

29. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea,* 424, fn. 10 quotes Picasso in an interview with his dealer and friend Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, "Gesprache mit Picasso," *Jahresing*, 59/60 (Stuttgart, 1959): 85-86.

30. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea,* 197.

background, atmosphere, void. It is on the distinction between these two concepts, convexity and concavity, presence and ambiance, foreground and background, on which a whole history of Western painting rests. Yet Picasso seems to be asking whether it would be possible to represent bodies in space without this contrast being the generative grammar? Clark phrases Picasso's question as "Might the reversible cube be made, or lead onto, a set of procedures in which the machinery of illusionism would be worked to cancel itself out, or to produce its own negation?"[31]

If both Teuber and Clark are correct, it is possible that William James's *Principles of Psychology* catalyzed Picasso's profound attempt to use the weapons of illusionism against itself. In other words, he tried to use what James called one of perception's most "ambivalent and vivid" conundrums —the puzzle of the reversible cube— to visually redefine presence, absence and objecthood. In Cubist painting there is no defining convexity and concavity, no determinate figure and ground. As Clark phrases it, in Cubism "there is no space to wander in, only interlocking positions." This pictorial redefinition of objecthood as a set of interlocking positions, rather than as simple "presence" is, for Clark the crux of Cubism: "Something is happening to the things of the world…something is being done to them: different unstable relations between things (or aspects of the same thing) are being imagined or denoted. But it is all being done by painting."[32]

Clark's description of Picasso's redefinition of objecthood matches quite precisely James's main point in the *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, most of which appeared between 1904 and 1905, in which he redefines identity, either of humans or objects, as residing in the relations between and among things, rather than in the things themselves. But James had already explored this idea earlier. In *Principles of Psychology* he proposed that the reality of things, their actual essence, lies in their multiple and unstable relations—in other words, things form their identities through their interactions with other objects, including people. In Chapter 22, "Reasoning," he describes how this identity formation works in the piece of paper he is writing on at that moment:

> Now that I am writing, it is essential that I conceive my paper as a surface for inscription...but if I wished to light a fire...the essential way of conceiving the paper would be as combustible material .: a combustible, a writing surface, a thin thing, a hydrocabonaceous thing, a thing eight inches one way and ten another, a thing just one furlong east of a certain stone in my neighbor s field, an American thing ad infinitum (p. 334)

The idea that Picasso was trying re-present in paint this very same conception of things may not be so far-fetched. Why else would Gertrude Stein, who was by all accounts the closest individual to Picasso in these key years, so clearly and unmistakably return to William James, and to *Principles*, to find the language to describe Picasso's surprising, revolutionary, and very controversial work? As she writes in Alfred Stieglitz's *Camera Work* in 1912:

> This one always had been working. This one was always having something that was coming out of this one that was a solid thing, a charming thing, a lovely thing, a perplexing thing, a disconcerting thing, a disturbing thing, a repellent thing, a very pretty thing. [33]

Apparently, as the reappearing motif of the bent visiting card throughout the Cubist work had already suggested, *Principles of Psychology* may not only have been a key text in the formulation of Cubism, but may have also served as sort of a code-book for deciphering the complex relationship between Gertrude Stein and Picasso, as they both worked out the implications of James's ideas together—she in verse and he in paint. This triadic relation also lends credence to Picasso's observation that "if Modernism was born in France, it was the product of Spaniards and Americans."[34]

James himself seemed to have approved of this project, as Stein tells us he visited her apartment in 1905 and reacted with great enthusiasm to the revolutionary art of her new friends, Picasso and Matisse during a visit to Paris. [35]

I began this essay by noting the charges of provincialism and cultural insensitivity lodged against William James by the earlier American cultural critics, not so much to emphasize their error, but because their assumptions and prejudices, both about pragmatism specifically and American culture in general, continue to regulate the interpretation of early 20th century American intellectual history. This is particularly true in my own field of art history, where alienation from the American context is considered a pre-requisite of serious aesthetic achievement. The fact that Apparently, the most cosmopolitan of modernists, can be regarded as equal contributors to the Modernist project. I say that

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31. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea*, 202.

32. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea*, 184.

33. Gertrude Stein, "Pablo Picasso," *Camera Work, Special Number* (1912), reprinted in *Alfred Stieglitz Camera Work, The Complete Illustrations 1903-1917* (Koln: Taschen, 1997), 666-667. This special issue of *Camera Work* reproduced images of the *Reservoir at Horta* and a 1909 study for *Woman with Pears.*

34. Picasso cited by Malcolm Bradbury, "The Nonhomemade World: European and American Modernism," *American Quarterly,* 39 (Spring 1987), 30.

35. Gertrude Stein, *Autobiography of Alice Toklas,* (1933) (New York: Vintage Books, 1990) 80.

David Hollinger was right, when he proposed in his introduction to *In the American Province*, that "in between these two abstractions—provincialism and cosmopolitanism—spans a field of concrete possibilities."

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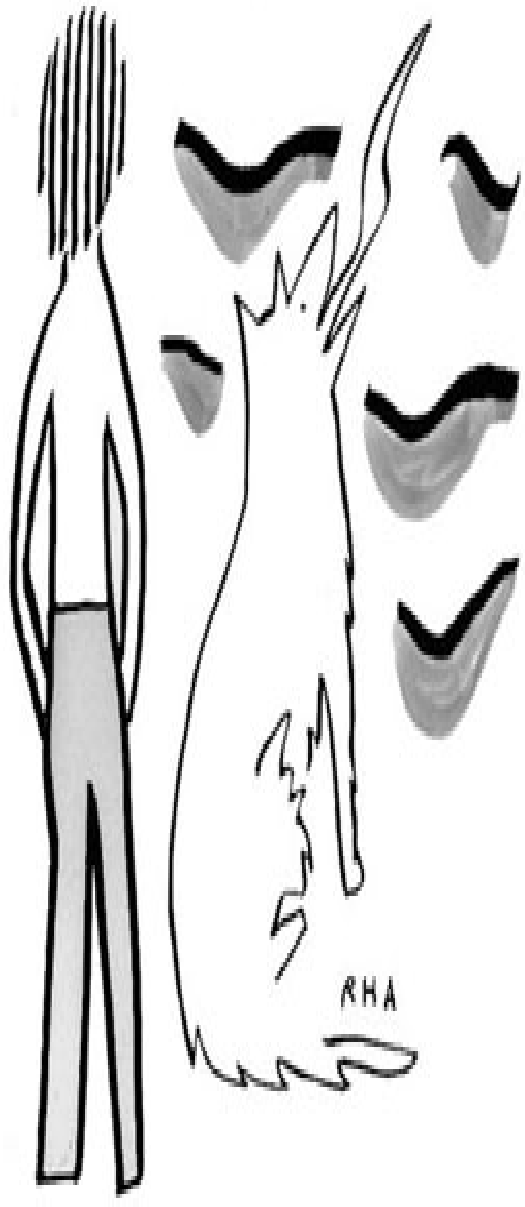

Brute and Human Intellect

quote by William James, commentary by R.H. Albright

Everyone who has owned a dog must, over and over again, have felt a strange sense of wonder that the animal, being as intelligent as he is, should not be vastly more so. His conditions would be easier to understand if he were either more universally stupid or more generally rational. The quickness with which he learns the signs which indicate that his master is going out, such as putting off slippers and putting on overcoat, seems incompatible with his utter inability to learn that dropping more coal into the grate will make a hotter fire....

To say that all human thinking is essentially of two kinds reasoning on the one hand and narrative, descriptive, contemplative thinking on the other is to say only what every reader s experience will corroborate....

Where contiguity predominates we have a dry, prosaic, literal sort of mind; and, on the contrary, where similarity has free play, we are apt to call the person fanciful, poetic, or witty.... Thus, in thinking of the sun-myths, I may have a gleam of admiration at the *gracefulness* of the primitive human mind, or a moment of disgust at the *narrowness* of modern interpreters. But, in the main, I think less of qualities than of whole things, real or possible, just as I may experience them.

W illiam James, from Brute and Human Intellect, 1878, [re-printed in *William James, Writings 1878-1899* (Library of America: 1982; Gerald Meyers, ed.)] 910-912

James acknowledges that the substance the "Reasoning" chapter in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) originally came from this article. I find much in this chapter to be an excellent description of what continues to be understood as "left-right brain theory." While James's observation about "woman's intuition" compared to "the masculine brain" in that chapter is *literally absurd* to me in light of my own experience with people, it is interesting as *mere analogy* for the left-right dichotomy. James himself aligns more with "right-brain" or intuitive thinking at times, as seen in the quote above. —RHA

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