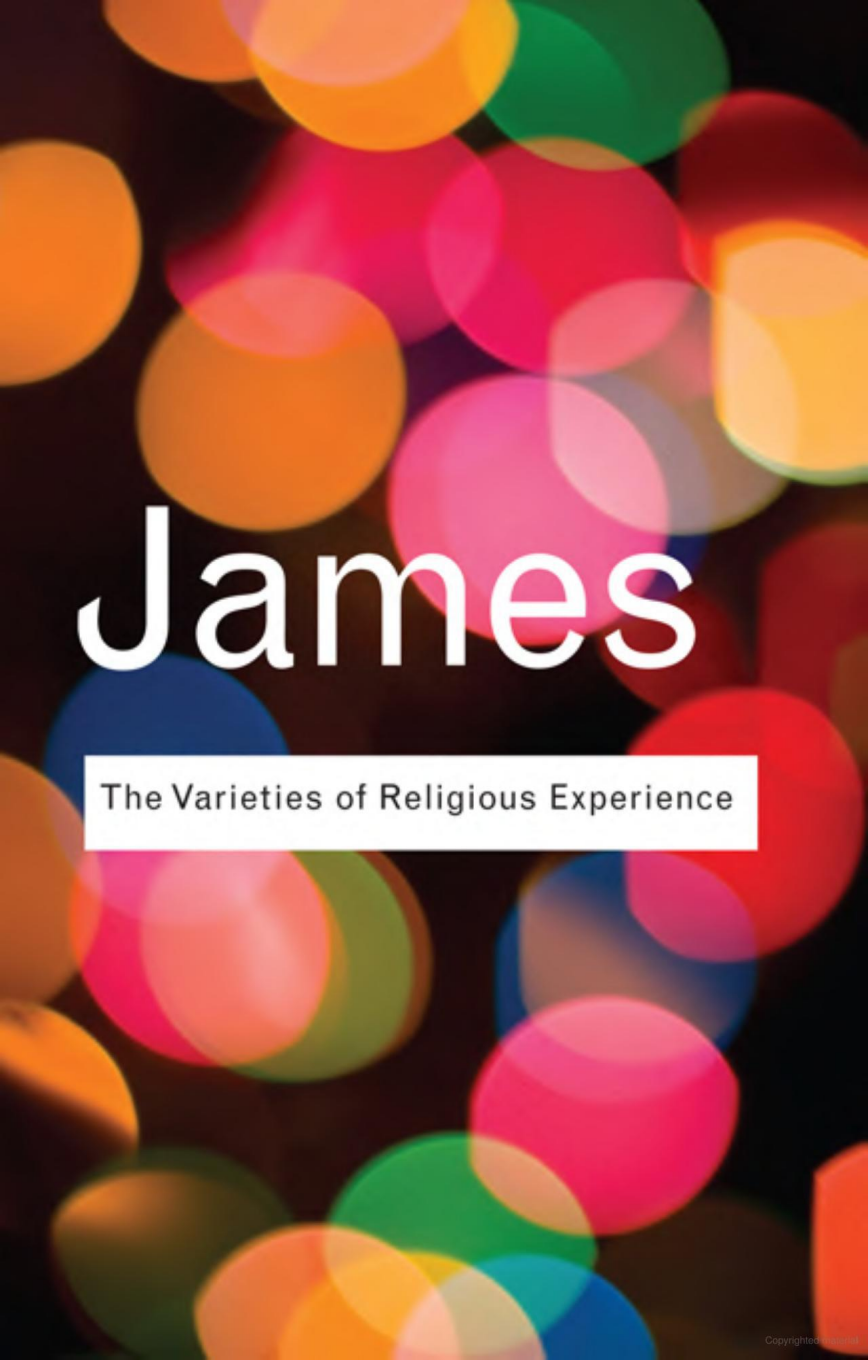

William
James

The Varieties of Religious Experience

A study in human nature

With a foreword by Micky James
and introductions by Eugene Taylor and
Jeremy Carrette

London and New York

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Foreword

To the Official Centenary Edition of William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* by Micky James

Greetings,

My having been asked to contribute a few words to this commemorative edition of *The Varieties* becomes a pleasure I tackle not lightly as I, myself, am a painter, not a scholar. In such lively regard do I hold the reader who is interested in this topic that I find myself all but purified in the waters. Your hefty and devoted attention to William James — to his ideas about religious experience, of course — but also to his mind and to the man himself, as well, would surely have blushingly distracted his own. You do him enormous honor.

I never knew my grandfather, William James, born as I was in 1923, the year following his own Alice's death, she then a widow of twelve years. I *did* meet his son, Alexander, who, of course, was my father, a painter, whose death brought his brothers Harry and Billy, to our New Hampshire home that February day of 1946. Though now fifty and more years later, I remember well my uncles' sundown arrival. That morning we made my father a coffin from old pine boards. Placed in the darkening dining room, there he was when they turned up. Standing there, the three of us, and looking down on him, I heard Uncle Harry say, "He was the most like Dad."

And so, in a curious way, I have met Gramps Willie, as we would affectionately refer to him in our middle-age, which may yet be another reason why I feel so spirited a nearness to all who are involved in this commemorative edition, you who — intellectually, sportingly — have given him your all, you who know him so well.

My own dyslexic father, born in the year of *The Principles*, 1890, was later to invite upon his father, William, no end of frustration and despair. From cool Chicorua, William wrote to his brother Henry the novelist, "Aleck having passed only in French, is back in hot Cambridge with his tutor. How long, oh Lord, how long?"

Maturing as a cerebral washout in that dynamic house on Irving Street, my father could hardly have felt little but a cautious distance from his father. Somewhere deep within, he must have nursed a lingering wound, for I never heard him speak but once — once only — of his own loving Dad. While posing for him one day for a portrait (I was 12), quite out of the blue I asked, "Did your father have a sense of humor?" He gave me this long look and, slowly putting down his brushes and palette, he said — and almost joyfully so — "For chrissake, *Yes*!" We then returned to our separate tasks.

Until the effect of a poor heart put an end to my dad's automatic writing days, it was always William James himself who would speak through the unconscious hand. Each session would begin, "This is your loving dad," and always in William James's own distinctive handwriting. But to each guest's most frequent question, "What's it like up there?" immediately the pencil would respond, "Does the robin tell her hatching secrets to a cow?"

So here we are, and now that I have just about satisfied *myself*, at least, that, indeed, I *have* met that dear man you honor here, here's to express my delight in the continuing importance of his work, and of my family's warm support of this unique publication. Insofar as I have been sanctioned by no one in particular, I give the James family seal of approval to what we shall henceforth call the official commemorative edition of *The Varieties*. All in all, it is quite overwhelming, really.

How unbearably touched he would have been had Mrs Piper assured him that of a distant day he would be accorded such an expression of *ultimate* respect. Could ever a hundredth anniversary be more sweet!

Boston, Massachusetts
March 2002

Editors' Preface

Eugene Taylor and Jeremy Carrette

The Routledge Centenary Edition of William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience* is based on the revised August 1902 edition, which according to Fredson Bowers, contains nineteen plate changes (Harvard edition, 1985:557) from the original June 1902 edition. The most significant change occurring in a footnote, in the conclusion, referring to a proposed posthumous work by Frederick Myers. The revised version contains an extended footnote on Myers's work and acknowledges Myers's explorations of the "subliminal region of consciousness." The first edition was published on 9 June 1902, when James also finished his Gifford Lectures, from which the text of the book is taken. William James's Gifford Lectures were delivered at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, in May and June of 1901 and 1902.

This centenary edition is published in conjunction with a special international and interdisciplinary centenary conference, held at Old College, University of Edinburgh on 5–8 July 2002, commemorating the Gifford Lectures and the publication of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Routledge will also publish the papers of this conference.

There have been many editions of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, most notably the 1985 Harvard edition, which provides many useful additional sources and appendices. However, the aim of this edition is to bring the reader back to the text in an accessible form in 2002. The centenary edition is completely reset with new introductions and a new index. The editors have framed the 2002 edition with two new introductory sections from the point of view of historical scholarship on James and critical work in the psychology of religion one hundred years after the first edition. The editors wish to valorise James scholarship from two different but related positions of

scholarship and seek to emphasise the continuing importance of the text for scholarship in the twenty-first century.

We are grateful to Micky James, William James's grandson, for agreeing to write a foreword to the centenary edition and for the James family's seal of approval.

INTRODUCTION: SECTION ONE[1]

The Spiritual Roots of James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*

Eugene Taylor, PhD
Saybrook Institute and Harvard University

> "Divinity lies all around us, but society remains too hidebound to accept that fact."
>
> William James

The search for the spiritual origins of William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, a work first published in 1902, begins with the first salvo of the transcendentalist movement, launched in 1821 at commencement ceremonies at Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A controversial assertion, at best, but one, I claim, that reflects not only the literary and intellectual origins of the work, but the genesis in James's mind of a certain point of view about the nature of human experience. And that point of view is this: that God, or whatever we take to be the divine, comes to us not

[1] We stand on the shoulders of giants: William James, L'experience religieuse, essai de Psychologie descriptive. Traduit avec l'autorisation de l'auteur par Frank Abauzit; preface d'Emile Boutroux. Paris: F. Alcan; Geneve: H. Kundig, 1906; von Georg Wobbermin, Die religiose Erfahrung in ihrer Mannigfaltigkeit: Materialien und Studien zu einer Psychologie und Pathologie des religiosen. Lebens von William James; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1914; Barzun, Jacques, Forward to *The Varieties*. New York: New American Library, 1958; Nock, Arthur Darby, Introduction to *The Varieties*. Glasgow: Fountain Books, 1960; Niebuhr, Reinhold, Introduction to *The Varieties*. New York, Collier 1961; Ratner, Joseph, Introduction to *The Varieties*. Enlarged ed., with appendices. New Hyde Park, N.Y.: University Books, 1963; Din va ravan / Vilyam Jaymz; Tarjamah-i Mahdi Qaimi. [Persian]. Qum: Dar al-Fikr [1359 i.e. 1980]; Marty, Martin, Introduction to *The Varieties*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England; New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 1985; Smith, J. E. Introduction to *The Varieties*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985.

through what is above and outside, but through our innards — through our spiritual interiors; through what is highest and most holy in ourselves.

The event was the reading of a Master's Thesis by Sampson Reed, a divinity student and follower of the religious tracts of the eighteenth-century Swedish scientist and interpreter of theological revelations, Emanuel Swedenborg.[2] Reed delivered his essay entitled "Oration on Genius," a charismatic and oracular work that extolled not the European tradition of rationalism, but the inner intuitive spiritual gifts of great geniuses who inspire the rest of us to heights never before achieved. Emerson, as Class Day Poet, sat in the audience and declared it "native gold."[3]

Emerson's involvement with the local Swedenborgian ministers was deeply entwined with his own developing career, first as an undergraduate at Harvard College and later as a young minister after he had interned under William Ellery Channing and been approbated to preach by the Unitarians. The "Oration on Genius," which Reed turned into a little book called *Growth of the Mind* (1826), subsequently became the model for Emerson's own first book *Nature* (1836).[4]

The main, inspiring concept Emerson borrowed from Swedenborg was the concept of correspondences — that every element in nature is somewhere reflected in the life of the soul. Later transcendentalists would turn this into what was to become the main theme of a national environmental movement — that God speaks to man through nature. In other words, if we are to see Divinity shine clearly within, we must protect and nurture our natural surroundings. William James would later be the first to enunciate such a heroic undertaking in his *Varieties* as "the moral equivalent of war."[5]

Other Swedenborgian ideas taken up by the transcendentalists included the Doctrine of Use, which influenced James's later definition of pragmatism; the action of Divine Providence, which became James's later doctrine of tychism; the influx of divine power into the field of normal waking consciousness, which was James's later statement on mystical awakening; and the concept of

[2] Sigstedt, Cyriel Sigrid, *The Swedenborg epic; The life and works of Emanuel Swedenborg*. New York: Bookman Associates, 1952. Swedenborgian thought had a significant influence on nineteenth-century popular American culture. Block, Marguerita, *The New Church in the New World: A study of Swedenborgianism in America*. New York: H. Holt & Co., 1932.

[3] Miller, Perry (ed) *The transcendentalists: An anthology*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950.

[4] Taylor, E. I., Ralph Waldo Emerson: The Swedenborgian and Transcendentalist connection. In R. Larsen (ed), *Emanuel Swedenborg; The vision continues.* (300th anniversary volume). New York: The Swedenborg Foundation, 1988. 127–136; Reprinted in J. Lawrence (ed) *Testimony to the Invisible*. San Francisco; J. Appleseed and Co., 1995.

[5] Taylor, E. I., William James and His Interpreters on the Moral Equivalent of War. Unpublished ms.

rationality.[6] This was not the mere rationality of the logicians, however; it was reason, based on our intuitions and their visible effects in action.

Eventually, in the work of some transcendentalist writers, poets, and visual artists, Swedenborgian and transcendentalist thought became so fused that only a concatanated name can really apply to the spiritual teachings of the era. It was a Swedenborgian and transcendentalist milieu. It was Swedenborgian and transcendentalist thought. It was a Swedenborgian and transcendentalist world view.

By the mid 1840s, Emerson's Swedenborgianism became significantly influenced by the ideas of Henry James, Sr., errant, utopian socialist, father to William James the psychologist and Henry the novelist, Calvinist and later Swedenborgian philosopher of religion, who was an aspiring nineteenth-century literary figure in his own right. Emerson and James, Sr. met in New York through Horace Greeley and Albert Brisbane, where Emerson was adopted into the James family and had the family guest room named after him; meanwhile christening the young William over his crib and thereby becoming by family lore William's official God Father.[7]

When the James family went abroad, Emerson, in turn, introduced Henry James, Sr. to Thomas Carlyle, where the Elder James met philosophers, writers, statesmen, and socialites who were to become significant in William and Henry's subsequent careers. For William, these included such figures as the utilitarian John Stewart Mill and the empiricist, Alexander Bain, both of whose ideas figured in the birth of American pragmatism.

After an intensely debilitating spiritual episode in 1844, through Carlyle, Henry James, Sr. was also led to the physician and translator of Swedenborg's scientific and medical writings, James John Garth Wilkinson, whose psycho-spiritual ministrations assisted James the Elder in his subsequent recovery.[8] On their initial meeting, Henry James, Sr. immediately became a convert to Swedenborg's writings and rushed out to buy the first of the books that now reside in the famous trunk containing Henry James, Sr.'s Swedenborg collection.[9] The contents of this trunk tell us that, subsequently, Henry James, Sr. began subsidizing Wilkinson's writings, while each of them named offspring after the other's family members. Wilkinson would also develop his own relationship to William, through their mutual interest in homeopathy,

[6] Taylor, E. I., The Spiritual Currents of American Pragmatism. Eight Lectures for the Swedenborg Society at Harvard University, Oct. '01–June '02. In honor of the Centenary of James's *Varieties*. Swedenborg Chapel, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[7] Habegger, Alfred. *The father: A life of Henry James, Sr.* New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1994.

[8] Wilkinson, Clement John. *James John Garth Wilkinson: A memoir of his life, with a selection of his letters.* London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1911.

[9] Deck, Ray, H., The "vastation" of Henry James, Sr.: New light on James's Swedenborgian theology. *Bulletin for Research in the Humanities*, 83:2, 1980, 216–247.

hypnosis, automatic writing, mediumship, and altered states of consciousness.[10] For, you see, Jamesean pragmatism was also a statement about the relation of interior to exterior consciousness, a point modern analytic philosophers have ignored.

Emerson, who had already known of Wilkinson through his earlier correspondence with Carlyle, became acquainted with the man personally through Henry James, Sr. Wilkinson assisted Emerson in securing lectures while abroad in England, and Emerson used Wilkinson's biography of Swedenborg as the basis for his chapter "Swedenborg, the Mystic" in *Representative Men* (1850).[11] William would later take Emerson's message — that Swedenborg revealed to us that God was within — as his primary theme of *The Varieties*.

Henry James, Sr. and Wilkinson continued their close relationship throughout the 1850s, the James family at one point even residing as neighbors to the Wilkinson's in England in 1855. That winter, Henry, age 12, and William, age 13 were exposed to a succession of young female mediums, who would come to Dr. Wilkinson's house to be entranced and participate in experiments in automatic writing. This, Professor Saul Rosenzweig has suggested, was a primary origin of the stream of consciousness technique later developed by William as a concept in psychology and by Henry, who developed it into a method for writing the modern psychological novel.[12]

At any rate, in the 1840s, Henry James, Sr. and Emerson continued to follow each other around the country giving public lectures and attending meetings of the same literary clubs when at home. First it was the Town and Country Club, when Henry James, Sr. lived in New York, then the famous Saturday Club when Henry James, Sr. moved his family to Boston, and later, the Chestnut Street Radical Club when the two were doting in their old age.

William, meanwhile, maturing into a young and restless man by the late 1850s, was still trying to settle on a vocation.[13] His father had developed a sophisticated spiritual philosophy of creation which, the father believed, needed some kind of scientific justification, and Henry James, Sr. saw William, his eldest son, as just the man for the job.

Henry James, Sr.'s thesis was that, while oneness with the Divine may characterize our earliest relation to God, the sense of egotistical self-hood

[10] List of the manuscripts and books prized by William James, autographed ms. in the hand of Alice Howe Gibbens James, n.d., James Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University. #4581.

[11] Emerson, Ralph Waldo, *Representative men: Seven lectures*. Boston: Phillips, Sampson, 1850.

[12] Rosenzweig, S., The Jameses's stream of consciousness. *Contemporary Psychology*, 3, 250–257, 1959.

[13] Perry, Ralph Barton, *The thought and character of William James, as revealed in unpublished correspondence and notes, together with his published writings*. 2 vols. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1935; Allen, Gay Wilson, *William James: A biography*. New York: Viking Press [1967].

intervenes through socialization so that we come to believe that the spiritual is a by-product of the natural world.[14] The natural world, however, is actually derived from the spiritual to begin with. But the ego maintains that by its own powers alone can reality be fathomed, a position designed to lead to the abject poverty of its own claim. The fall from egotistical self-hood is the result, followed by a complete surrender to the workings of the Divine and a realization that the natural is indeed derived from the spiritual and not the other way around. The Divine can no longer manifest itself in individual lives through an exclusive sense of oneness, however, so that the person must now turn to relationship with others as the vehicle for realizing God consciousness. One awakens to what Henry James, Sr. called the Divine Natural Humanity, responding to Swedenborg's conception of the Grand Man within each soul in the larger sense of relationships as spiritual community. Someone just needed to prove it scientifically.

William, however, just wanted to paint. Reluctantly, his father set both William and Henry up as students of William Morris Hunt, a Barbizon stylist and portrait painter, in New Port, Rhode Island, beginning in 1858.

Hunt encouraged James to paint the larger picture by playing with the tension between light and dark, creating depth by not painting a single line separating objects, but by shadowing, and by fusing one's subjective experience with an objective perception of the object. Art historians have proposed that this was one of the important origins of James's radical empiricism.[15] Hunt also introduced his students to another Barbizon painter, George Inness, later acclaimed as America's greatest landscape painter, a man with artistic connections to the transcendentalists whose paintings were soon to become deeply influenced by Swedenborgian ideas.[16]

By 1861, consciously or unconsciously fulfilling his father's wish, William James suddenly had a change of mind, and through his father's literary connections with the Concord transcendentalists (Emerson was an Overseer at Harvard by that time), entered Agassiz's Lawrence scientific School to major in chemistry under Charles William Eliot. William, it turns out, was essentially escaping into science to avoid a direct confrontation with his father's idealistic, religious metaphysics.

Agassiz, a friend of both Emerson and Henry James, Sr. through the Saturday Club, was at that time the rising star for the creationist theory of

[14] James, Henry, *Society the redeemed form of man and the earnest of God's omnipotence in human nature, affirmed in letters to a friend*. Boston: Houghton, Osgood, 1879; James, Henry, *The secret of Swedenborg: Being an elucidation of his doctrine of the divine natural humanity*. Boston: Fields, Osgood, 1869.

[15] Adams, Henry, William James, Henry James, John La Farge and the foundations of radical empiricism. *American Art Journal*, 17:1, 1985, p. 60.

[16] Taylor, E. I. The Interior Landscape: William James and George Inness on Art from a Swedenborgian Point of View, *Archives of American Art Journal* (Smithsonian Institution), 1997. 1&2, 2–10.

evolution in American science, just as Darwin's theory of natural selection burst upon the scene. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences lined up against the American Philosophical Society, and the national debate was soon raging over whether God created all species at once or the different species evolved through myriad forms, gradually, over long eons of time, guided by nothing more spiritual than blind and random streams of beneficent variation.

William James plunged into these swirling currents when he became a student at Agassiz's Lawrence scientific School, but he promptly came up on the side of the Darwinians around the Harvard botanist Asa Gray, intimate of Darwin's inner circle.[17] Gray first introduced the theory of natural selection into American science a month before publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. And he could count a few of the Harvard faculty already on his side, including Charles William Eliot, James's chemistry professor, and Chauncey Wright, a part-time employee at the Harvard College Observatory who studied the mathematical arrangement of leaves for Gray and fancied himself the philosopher at the college pump.

Wright had written an essay fusing the utilitarianism of Mill with the evolutionary theory of Darwin that had so impressed Darwin that he reproduced it in England at his own expense and then promptly wrote to Wright, asking if he had any time, to write next about the influence of natural selection on language. The result was Wright's now famous essay "The Evolution of Self Consciousness," which inspired William James to take up the study of consciousness in a Darwinian context just when everyone else was focussing exclusively on plants and animals.[18] These ideas formed the content of James's very first professional publications in science, and would later ground James's study of spirituality within the experience of the individual.

In 1861, William James also met Charles Sanders Peirce [pron. "purse"] for the first time, the irascible and eccentric son of Benjamin Peirce, a close colleague of Agassiz's and head of the Harvard College Observatory.[19] Benjamin Peirce had taught his son a great deal about the sciences at an early age and reared son Charles as a kind of child prodigy, but the reality was that the boy had lifelong emotional problems as a result.

William James befriended Peirce, and Peirce, in turn, introduced James to the British Empiricists, the logic of science, and the literature on experimental psychophysics. The two soon became fast friends, so that when

[17] Dupree, A. Hunter, *Asa Gray, American botanist, friend of Darwin*. Johns Hopkins Paperbacks ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988; Darwin, Charles, *On the origin of the species by means of natural selection, or, The preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*. London: John Murray, 1859.

[18] Wiener, Philip P. *Evolution and the founders of pragmatism; with a foreword by John Dewey*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1949.

[19] Brent, Joseph. *Charles Sanders Peirce: A life*. Rev. and enl. ed., Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1998.

William traveled to the Amazon on the Thayer expedition with Agassiz in 1865, Peirce would take a break from studying his Kant for four hours a day by going over and visiting with Henry James, Sr., who, in a largely unnamable way, adopted him as a spiritual son into the James family. Henry James, Sr., at the time, was writing prolifically about Swedenborg's ideas. As a result, Peirce, who had known about the works of the Swedish scientist before, began reading Swedenborg more ernestly. He reviewed Henry James, Sr.'s books when they were published, and insofar as James the Elder had informally founded his own religious sect, Peirce, without openly announcing it, was among the few who became an ardent disciple.[20]

William James, meanwhile, was still struggling to find a vocation. There was a plan among his friends to get him to return to painting when he went sketching with George Inness on Mt. Desert Island in 1863. William had transferred to Harvard Medical School in 1864, the year his father moved the family from New York to Boston, thinking he might become a physician, or at least qualify as a knowledgeable patient in an asylum. His trip to the Amazon in 1865 was a test to see if he could be a naturalist. In all this he was struggling to become a scientist, although he was ultimately unable to reconcile himself to the anti-metaphysical and anti-religious bent of the extreme positivists such as Wright. He did earn the MD in 1869, but took it as something of a non sequitur, as he felt too weak and unsure of himself to even consider opening a practice.

The result was that William James also plunged into a near-suicidal depression in 1869. It took him several years to recover, and he did this by reading the French Catholic philosopher, Renouvier, on the will; the British poet Coleridge on the limits of the scientific mind-set, and finally, James himself declared, "by believing to believe in free-will." In other words, he willed to believe that the mind is a self-active agent, capable of altering material circumstances by the exercise of conscious intention. Later, in *The Varieties*, James gave an account of his near-suicidal breakdown but presented it in disguised form, claiming only that it was from a French correspondent.[21]

James's recovery could be seen as a compromise between the extreme religious position of his father and the extreme scientific position of Wright. William James used Wright to escape his father's smothering metaphysics, but it took a near-suicidal episode for James to get free of Wright's hypnotic ideas about reductionistic science. The payoff for William came at a painfully high personal price in the form of recurring bouts of anxiety and depression.

[20] Taylor, E. I., Peirce and Swedenborg, *Studia Swedenborgiana*. 1986, 6:1, 25–51, a point confirmed by Max Fisch (personal communication).

[21] Anderson, James William, "The worst kind of melancholy": William James in 1869. *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 30:4, 1982, 369–386. See also, p. 60 of *The Varieties*.

The prize, however, was that for the rest of his career as a philosopher and psychologist, he felt he could effectively draw on both epistemological domains and, in fact, bridge them with his own final tripartite metaphysics of pragmatism, pluralism, and radical empiricism.

James nursed his depression back to health over a several year period under his father's protective roof in a house centrally located near his friends in the heart of the Harvard College campus — the site where the present Harvard Faculty Club now stands. By having a personal chat with William's old chemistry Professor, the newly elected President of Harvard, Charles William Eliot, William's mother helped him land his first teaching assignment at Harvard, anatomy and physiology, in 1872. At the same time, his father found him a suitable wife among the Swedenborgians, Alice Howe Gibbens, whom William married in 1878.

James went on to teach the first course in the United States on physiological psychology; he opened the first experimental laboratories in psychology to undergraduates to study the new science, gave the first graduate PhD in the subject (to G. Stanley Hall), and he went on to write a definitive text book in psychology, and to become a pioneer in both academic and medical psychology, as well as philosophy, and religious studies. He had at last found a vocation.[22]

Peirce and James began monthly meetings in the 1870s of what came to be called The Metaphysical Club, alternating between the elder Peirces and the Jameses dining room.[23] The group was made up of a few lawyers and local philosophers, among them Peirce, James, and Wright, whom Peirce and James considered their "intellectual boxing master." The discussions tended toward the philosophy of science, utilitarianism, the practical application of ideals, and the consequences of belief, culminating in 1878 in Peirce's first formal enunciation of pragmatism. It was an article entitled "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" that appeared in *Popular Science Monthly*.[24]

Peirce's point was that in order for a rational thought to be complete, one should consider its consequences. This is tantamount to Swedenborg's definition of rationality, although both Swedenborg and Emerson took reason to be derived from intuition and confirmed by acts. Peirce considered the

[22] Taylor, E. I., New Light on the Origins of William James's Experimental Psychology. In T. Henley and M. Johnson (eds), *Reflections on The Principles of Psychology: William James after a Century*. New York: Earlbaum, 1990, 33–62. Also, Taylor, E. I., The case for a uniquely American Jamesian tradition in psychology. In Margaret Donnelly (ed). *Reinterpreting the Legacy of William James*. (APA Centennial William James Lectures). (pp. 3–28) Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association. 1992.

[23] Fisch, M., Was there a Cambridge Metaphysical Club? In FC Moore & RS Robin, *Studies in the philosophy of C. S. Peirce*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1964, 3–32.

[24] Peirce, C. S. How to make our ideas clear. *Popular Science Monthly*, 1878.

role of intuition in his theory of abduction, but gave it no exalted place. The Swedenborgian definition of the rational was also not the general definition of the Kantian philosophers or the rational scientific reductionist, who demanded that reality be defined only in terms of the logical ordering of sense perceptions.[25]

William James, however, took pragmatism to mean that beliefs are tested by their consequences. What one truly believes is measured by acts and their effects, not merely by professed ideals. As we have said, this is essentially a restatement of the Swedenborgian Doctrine of Use — that God expresses himself in common terms through the use to which each person puts their special gifts to enrich the lives of others. It is an extension of the Doctrine of the Rational, which refers to the development of the capacities love and wisdom confirmed through uses.[26] Peirce imbibed these ideas in long conversations with Henry James, Sr. while William was in Brazil, finally converting them into his own understanding of the pragmatic ideal. By deriving his own version of pragmatism from Peirce, William James could at least justify his father's theories about spirituality. But these motives remained largely below the threshold of consciousness for William and are the stuff only of a later interpretation through the dual lenses of depth psychology and history.

We may say here, however, that insofar as the comparison holds true, William James derived his Swedenborgian interpretation of pragmatism through Peirce, because psychologically he could not derive it from his father directly. The breech between them was too deep and William had come too far in his own psychic escape from his father's metaphysics to suddenly embrace them wholeheartedly again. It was sufficient that he could still make contact with his father's ideas through Peirce's interpretation.

James later expanded pragmatism to mean a method for validating truth claims as well as a means to reconcile conflicting truth statements.[27] Not only are beliefs tested by their moral and aesthetic outcome, but, James said, if two or more conflicting claims about the nature of ultimate reality all lead to the same end, then for all intents and purposes they may be declared equal, regardless of their different origins and appearances. This is not to say they are the same, however. In this way, the Swedenborgian Doctrine of Use was filtered through Henry James, Sr.'s theories about the Divine Natural Humanity, to influence William James's later definition of the pragmatic ideal.

[25] Florschutz, Gottlieb. Swedenborg and Kant: *Emanuel Swedenborg's mystical view of humankind, and the dual nature of humankind in Immanuel Kant*. Translated by George F. Dole. West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 1993.

[26] Swedenborg, Emanuel, *Sapienta angelica de divino amore et de divina sapientia* [*Angelic wisdom concerning the divine love and the divine wisdom*]. The Latin edited from the author's original edition published at Amsterdam 1763. New York: American Swedenborg printing and publishing society, 1890.

[27] James, W., *Pragmatism*. New York: Longmans, Green, 1907.

As a general statement defending religious belief, James would declare his position publicly in 1898, launching pragmatism as an international movement, while giving Peirce full credit for the idea.[28] For his part, Peirce violently objected to James's emphasis on acts, when all Peirce had intended was to articulate a rule of logic. He declared that James's pragmatism had nothing to do with his own, and that Peirce, henceforth, intended to change the name of his philosophy from pragmatism to pragmaticism, "a name ugly enough to be kept safe from kidnappers."

And here we have the origin of the two pragmatisms — James's, which would influence functional psychology and the budding twentieth century popular movement known as the Progressive Era and concretize pragmatic philosophy as quintessentially American; and Peirce's, which would lead the logicians to the mathematicalization of thought, the theory of signs, simiotics, and the kind of philosophy that today continues to dominate academic philosophy departments particularly focused on the analytic philosophy of reductionistic science.

The period of the 1870s and 1880s was wild and tumultuous for both James and Peirce, James's career generally ascending to international acclaim; Peirce's hitting a minor peak and then descending into almost complete, poverty stricken obscurity. James found a vocation teaching philosophy and psychology; he got married and started a family. He contracted to write a textbook in psychology and he soon became famous for wrestling the concepts of psychology from philosophy and bringing them into the domain of physiological psychology.

Peirce, meanwhile, had separated from his wife, Melusina Harriet Fay, after a short marriage and began travelling abroad, taking pendulum measurements for the US Coastal Survey. By the mid 1880s, he had landed himself a job teaching logic at the newly founded Johns Hopkins University. But he was not reappointed, ostensibly because of the rumor that he was living with a woman out of wedlock, Miss Juliet Froizey. Thereafter he came into a small inheritance and moved with Juliet to a town in Pike County, in the wilderness of central Pennsylvania, where he began to erect Arisby. The large ostentatious house underwent construction until the funds ran out. It had an unfinished ballroom on the entire third floor, where Peirce would later hide from his creditors after pulling up the rope ladder.

Peirce fell into even more dire straits after the stock market crash of 1893. He and Juliet subsisted on what meager jobs he could garner — book reviews, journal articles, and so on, while he made continuous plans and solicited subscriptions for a formal multi-volume set of works on logic, and

[28] James, W., *Philosophical conceptions and practical results*. Address before the Berkeley Philosophical Union, Berkeley, Ca.: The University Press, 1898.

other projects that never came to fruition. Meanwhile, he kept up his correspondence with William James. He proposed to the editor of *Scribner's Magazine* at one point that he do an exposition of Swedenborg's ideas, and in spells of depression, wrote to James that he thought of his father and of Swedenborg's ideas often. At one point, Peirce even composed a series of cosmological essays for Paul Carus's journal *The Monist*, and in one of them, "Evolutionary Love," he maintained that Henry James, Sr. had everlastingly solved the problem of Evil (Swedenborg had said in his *Divine Love and Wisdom* that the origin of Heaven is God, while the original of Hell is man's mis-use of the capacities for rationality and freedom.)[29] Peirce, in other words, is the conduit through which William's definition of the pragmatic ideal was able to flourish. Both had mutual roots in the Swedenborgian and transcendentalist milieu.[30]

William James was sitting in Charcot's lectures on somnambulism and hysteria at the Salpetriere in Paris in 1882 when he received the news that his father was dying. He never made it to the funeral, but wrote a long epistolary letter to his memory. The great Emerson died a few months later. That two giant oaks in William's intellectual firmament were felled in the same year was superseded only by the grief the family experienced over the death of their mother. Actually, she had died first. Henry James, Sr. followed a few months later by fasting to death, and Emerson went at the end of the year. It took William two more years to emerge out of these events, which he partly accomplished by publishing his first book, *The Literary Remains of the late Henry James*.[31] It contained a 102-page tribute to his father. "If only someone somewhere was able to take up his system and apply it," James concluded there wistfully. He was still unsure that he was that person.

But no sooner had the two primary exponents of monistic idealism in Christian theology and the American visionary tradition been laid to rest when James found they had been replaced in his cosmological orbit by a new colleague at Harvard, Josiah Royce.[32] Royce had been born in a native California cowboy town and was one of the first students to graduate from the University of California at Berkeley and then Johns Hopkins. He was also a man who had studied under Wundt and Fechner in Leipzig. Royce presented himself as James's replacement that sabbatical year, and with James's help, managed to stay on as the stone against which James sharpened his philosophical sword of pragmatism for the remainder of their two careers. Royce would transform himself from an apologist for Christian monism into a

[29] Note 16 above.

[30] Taylor, E. I., William James and C. S. Peirce, *Chrysalis* [Journal of the Swedenborg Foundation), 1:3, 1986, 207–212.

[31] James, W. (ed) *The literary remains of the late Henry James*. Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1884.

[32] Clendenning, John, *The life and thought of Josiah Royce*. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

philosopher of science interested in ethics, loyalty, and idealism, as well as symbolic logic and the logic and philosophy of science. He would become a steward of the then still uncollected papers of Charles Sanders Peirce and create a seminar that would attract an elite of Harvard's younger generation who would after his death in 1916 became some of the key powerbrokers in the University.[33] More than that, Royce became the beloved friend of William James, and his constant analysis of the pragmatic ideal in a Christian spiritual context helped make a more mature philosopher out of his mutually beloved colleague. Royce's presence also permitted James to range far and wide beyond the purely Christian scheme of salvation alone in order to look for the generic roots of spiritual experience across cultures.[34]

William James, himself, finally came out with his textbook, *The Principles of Psychology*, but twelve years late. Instead of the slim and efficient volume he had forecast, it came to over 1,200 pages in two volumes. Exhausted, he said he was finally glad to get that "dropsical tumescent mass" off his desk. The work received international acclaim and two years later he produced the cut-and-paste version, *Psychology: Briefer course*, which became one of the most used introductory textbooks in psychology over the next twenty years.[35]

His students dubbed *The Principles* "The James" and *Briefer course*, "the Jimmy." Both works had a common theme focused almost entirely on a psychology of the individual, what goes on inside people's inner lives, their feelings, sensation, cognitions and perceptions; the working of the individual will, the relation of the instincts to the emotions, and what kind of a self individuals become in light of James's claim that each of us is comprised of many selves. He would later articulate this focus on the individual as his doctrine of pluralism, acknowledging that there is very little difference between people, "but what difference there is," he said, "was very important."

The problem with *The Principles*, however, was that it had two centers of gravity — a scientific and a philosophical one. From the standpoint of science, James wrote from the perspective of reductionistic positivism. He did this, he said, because there was no epistemological system yet developed that was powerful enough to challenge it. From the standpoint of philosophy, he left open the possibility that an alternative epistemology might be found to the way science was conducted. Pragmatism demanded, after all, that two different approaches leading to the same ends were for all intents and purposes

[33] Costello, Harry Todd, *Josiah Royce's seminar, 1913–1914: As recorded in the notebooks Harry T. Costello*. Edited by Grover Smith, with an essay on the philosophy of Royce by Richard Hocking. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981.

[34] Taves, A, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

[35] James, W. *Principles of psychology*, 2 vols. New York: Henry Holt, 1890; James, W. *Psychology: Briefer course*. New York: Henry Holt, 1892.

equal, even if not the same. So, in addition to the central theme of the work, that the thinker is the thought, and nothing more need be posited of a scientific psychology, James engaged in numerous forays into dissociation, multiple personality, and alternative states of consciousness. It was a definition of consciousness that deviated significantly from the normative psychologists' almost exclusive focus on simple reaction times, knee jerk reflexes, and the object at the cognitive center of the field of attention, and it was destined to become James's central focus after 1890.[36]

Four years later, in his presidential address to the American Psychological Association, James reminded his audience of the epistemological conundrum he had presented in *The Principles*. But he shocked them there by saying that, rather than take up the old arguments, he was going to throw them over, and instead, argue for a new epistemology for experimental science. It took him two more years to give it a name, when it appeared for the first time in his first philosophical work, *The Will to Believe*.[37] There in the preface, he called it radical empiricism, by which he meant a radical transformation of the reductionistic outlook in psychology and science generally by shifting to a focus on pure experience in the immediate moment.

This was at first confusing, because to the rationalists, empiricism meant sense perception — the ability of the senses to react to stimuli in the external world and deliver a signal to the brain where it is perceived and where the faculty of reason would do its work naming and categorizing the event. To this definition of empiricism James said, well, yes and no. Yes, this was the way empiricism had been defined, but no, that was not exactly the sense in which he meant it. By empiricism he meant experience. The clue to the difference was his use of the term radical. By radical empiricism he meant not sense perception alone but the full spectrum of human experiences in all their vagaries and unkemptness. This includes the clean and clear sensations and the fuzzy and oftentimes unidentifiable ones, as well as our responses to them, because feeling and perception can never be separated from the object.

From the positivist's viewpoint, in *The Principles of Psychology* consciousness had meant that the thinker was the thought. Psychology as a science could only focus on the rational ordering of sense impressions, which meant analyzing only what was at the center of cognitive attention in the field of waking awareness — the object of consciousness and our thoughts and feelings about the object. This was the stream of thought and feeling that James collectively referred to in *Psychology: Briefer course* (1892) as "the stream of consciousness." In *The Principles*, however, he had postulated the stream of

[36] Taylor, E. I., *William James on Consciousness beyond the Margin*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.

[37] James, W., *The will to believe*. New York: Longman's, Green, 1896.

consciousness within the individual as separate from a world of objects. Curiously, in *Psychology: Briefer course*, this is the very characteristic of personal consciousness that he left out. Transcendence of the subject–object dichotomy would turn out to be a primary characteristic of the mystical experience in *The Varieties*.

But that was still eight years away. In 1894 James was only willing to postulate that if we actually experience more than one state of consciousness this would significantly change the equation, not only of what, but how science studies the mind, because it meant that the context in which the object was perceived was not consistent if one's immediate state of consciousness is not taken into account at the same time. This led James to surmise that scientific psychology might be restricting itself to nothing more than a colossal elaboration on the ego. Intrigued by this possibility, through the influence of the American and British Societies for Psychical Research and new experimental evidence pouring in from the so-called French Experimental Psychology of the Subconscious, after 1890 James began to focus more on the penumbra or margin of the normal everyday waking state. He reviewed Pierre Janet and Alfred Binet for the latest on experimental studies of dissociation. He introduced the work of Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud to the American Psychological public for the first time. He taught a pioneering graduate level course in experimental psychopathology at Harvard from 1893 to 1898; he experimented extensively with automatic writing and hypnosis, he wrote on multiple personality, he continued to experiment personally with mind-expanding drugs, and became a prime mover in launching the so-called Boston School of Abnormal psychology.[38]

Human personality was made up of an ultimate plurality of states, he had said in his article on "The Hidden Self" in 1890, and consciousness, he declared in his 1896 Lowell Lectures on Exceptional Mental States, was more than merely a field with a focus and a margin.[39] While the object of consciousness dominated our attention, it was the margin that controlled meaning, since every thought is warmed by an emotion that makes it our own. Our emotional life, in turn, points to the reality of an underground reservoir of memories, instincts, and attitude structures which James came to postulate, following F. W. H. Myers and Pierre Janet, as a vast subliminal or subconscious region of our psychic life — innumerable states of consciousness that may have never before been in the field of conscious awareness but

[38] Taylor, E. I., The Boston School of Psychotherapy: Science, Healing, and Consciousness in 19th Century New England. Eight Lowell Lectures for the Massachusetts Medical Society. Delivered at the Boston Public Library, March–April, 1982.

[39] Taylor, E. I., *William James on Exceptional Mental States: Reconstruction of the 1896 Lowell Lectures*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1982; reproduced in paperback by the University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1984.

which nevertheless exist within us, both as dissolutive states of psychopathology as well as evolutive states of a transcendent nature.

James also first blossomed as a philosopher during this period. His enunciation of the "will to believe" in 1896 had established that both the good and the bad live *in potentia* within each one of us, and that our choices make the one or the other come into being by the energy we invest in them. For moral and aesthetic purposes, progress is defined by our continued struggle to choose the good, knowing the bad could become actualized, by making the wrong choice, or simply by not choosing at all. Similarly, health is defined by our continued efforts to appeal to the growth-oriented dimension of personality rather than to the deficiency-oriented side of the equation. Some are born into an immediate experience of higher states of spiritual consciousness, while others have to awaken to it at some point along the chronological life span. James even commented on Emerson in *The Varieties* as an example of a once-born personality — someone who was born with the sense for what a transcendent awakening already was, someone who did not have to struggle and go through some dark night of the soul before arriving at such an awakening. Both he himself, as well as his own father, on the other hand, William would count among the twice-born.

William James delivered the Gifford Lectures at Edinburgh in two parts; ten lectures in the late spring of 1901 and ten in the late spring of 1902. The first printing of *The Varieties* appeared in June, 1902. He established that religion focused on the experience of the individual; he highlighted the life of the sick-soul and reviewed the religion of healthy-mindedness; he explored conversion and saintliness. But his primary focus was on the ultimately transforming power of the mystical experience.

James anticipates the arguments of his detractors when he takes up the point of view of those reductionists who deny mystical states, because they believe all such reports by others to be hysteria, shamming, and superstition. To these skeptics James said that the most important way to discern the real from the unreal — to differentiate the pathological from the truly divine states of mystical consciousness, is to examine their fruits. Borrowing from the Sermon on the Mount, he said, it is not by their roots, but "by their fruits ye shall know them."[40]

The Varieties was thus also a seminal moment in the evolution of his philosophy of pragmatism. If beliefs lead to erroneous consequences then they prove themselves false; if they lead to an increase in the moral and aesthetic quality of our lives, then we may judge them as true. And in general, he says, mystic states lead to such consequences. He enumerates their superlative quality, insofar as they lead us to such heights that we are forced to describe

[40] Matthew, 7:16.

> which we thence receive help us to live, they found invincible assurance of a world beyond the sense, they melt our hearts and communicate significance and value to everything and make us happy. They do this for the individual who has them, and other individuals follow him. Religion in this way is absolutely indestructible. Philosophy and theology give their conceptual interpretations of this experiential life. The farther margin of the subliminal field being unknown, it can be treated as by Transcendental Idealism, as an Absolute mind with a part of which we coalesce, or by Christian theology, as a distinct deity acting upon us. Something, not our immediate self, does act on our life! So I seem doubtless to my audience to be blowing hot and cold, explaining away Christianity, yet defending the more general basis from which I say it proceeds. I fear that these brief words may be misleading, but let them go! When the book comes out, you will get a truer idea.[41]

Having thus adjusted himself in relation to Henry James, Sr.'s religious metaphysics, William James then turned to the great Emerson. *The Varieties* was first published in June of 1902, and with that behind him, James began preparing a speech for the centenary of Emerson's birth in Concord, Massachusetts in 1903. He read and re-read all of Emerson's works in their entirety, marking in the margins, "His pragmatism," which James heartily accepted, and "His monism," which James fervently rejected. In a remarkable concatenation of events, James was able through these opportunities to settle his spiritual accounts with both his father and his God-Father at a mature stage of his own intellectual career. For the Swedenborgian and transcendentalist ethic was conjoined in such a way in his world view that they could not be told apart; intellectually and spiritually, Emerson stood just behind Henry James, Sr. as sure as he was the Father's shadow, and William could only deal with them together.

Thus emancipated, James was free to evolve his own comprehensive understanding of psychic life, having moved from a cognitive psychology of consciousness in *The Principles*, to a dynamic psychology of the subliminal in the Exceptional Mental States Lectures, to the primacy of the mystical state of consciousness in *The Varieties*. He could now more fully outline his metaphysics of consciousness underlying the full spectrum of experience, so he turned his attention back to a clearer articulation of radical empiricism. He was distracted from his task, however, by the international acclaim afforded the pragmatist movement. Continually drawn to public debates about the issues, he had to leave his radical empiricism go. The result was his great unfinished arch, for he died without fully elaborating the center of his metaphysics — pure experience in the immediate moment. In a final publication just before

[41] Henry James (ed) *Letters of William James*, v. 2, Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 149–150.

he died in 1910, he called upon his colleagues to study the fall of the threshold of consciousness, by which he meant a widening and deepening of waking consciousness to the point where it touches the transcendent in mystical awakening. We must do this, even though we will not understand such phenomena, he said, either in this generation or the next.

We might ask ourselves then how far the fields of medicine, psychology, philosophy, and religion have progressed since James's time in understanding mystical experience.[42] Most American and European philosophers remain dominated by the analytic tradition and their work no longer contains any iconography of the transcendent.[43] The field of religious studies continues to be dominated by a focus on Christian theology, although there are exceptions, such as the works of Joseph Marechal, Robert Forman, Huston Smith, or G. William Barnard.[44] In the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV)*, psychiatric medicine has at least recognized the category of religious and spiritual emergencies — that is, the presence of psychotic-like symptoms which do not need medication, but are the function of spiritual conflicts about belief that require only some kind of religious counseling to get through the crisis. Mind/body medicine, such as that put forward by Herbert Benson, clearly associates the relaxation response and the healing effects of the placebo with interior mystical experience, particularly in advanced Buddhist meditators.[45]

With the exception of a few entrepreneurial lights such as Walter H. Clark, Wilson van Dusen, or Walter Pahnke; depthpsychologists, such as Carl Jung; or some of the modern day transpersonalists such as Charles Tart or Stanislav Grof, or neurotheologists such as the late Eugene D'Aquili and Andrew Newberg,[46] mainstream academic, scientific psychology has stayed remarkably

[42] Taylor, E. I. & Wozniak, R. (eds) *Pure Experience: The response to William James*. London: Routledge/Thommes, 1996.

[43] An exception might be Lamberth, David C., *William James and the metaphysics of experience*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999, except that this important and trenchant investigation omits an analysis of James's psychology, which I claim is the key to understanding James's metaphysics of consciousness.

[44] Marechal, J., *Studies in the psychology of the mystics*. Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1964; Forman, RKC (ed). *The Problem of pure consciousness: Mysticism and philosophy*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990; Smith, Huston, *Why religion matters: The fate of the human spirit in an age of disbelief*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.

[45] Lukoff, D., & Lu, F. (1988). Transpersonal psychology research review: Mystical experience. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 21(1), 161–184; Taylor, E. I., The perfect correlation between mind and brain: *The Varieties* and mind/body medicine. *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. Centenary issue celebrating *The Varieties*. Guest edited by James Anderson. 2002.

[46] Clark, Walter H., *The psychology of religion: An introduction to religious experience and behavior*. New York: Macmillan, 1958; Van Dusen, Wilson, *Beauty, wonder, and the mystical mind*. West Chester, Pa.: Chrysalis Books, 1999; Barnard, G. William, *Exploring unseen worlds: William James and the philosophy of mysticism*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997; Charles T. Tart (ed). *Altered states of consciousness*.

insulated from the subject of mysticism. And while radical changes continue out in the psychotherapeutic counter-culture, an arena where just such a spiritual psychology of comparative mystical states is flourishing,[47] the direction mainstream academic psychology is going in — toward cognitive neuroscience and the medical model — remains reductionistic and exclusionary.

We may predict, however, that the humanistic implications of the neuroscience revolution are already pervasive enough that the revolution itself has now passed out of the hands of the reductionists who started it, making its eventual outcome completely unknown.[48] All we know now is that the heart of this revolution is a biology of consciousness and that it is having tremendous philosophical effects on a re-examination of the way science itself is conducted. Into such a breach a new generation of psychologists may step who are more philosophical — meaning in this case more realistic — about how science is carried on, more phenomenological in understanding the person, more existential about their absolute assurance of method, more cognizant of the reality of transcendent experiences, more cross-cultural and comparative, and more visionary in the way they conceive the agenda of their discipline. At that point, we may see a revival of the field called the psychology of religion within psychology as James originally conceived it in *The Varieties*.

3rd ed. San Francisco: Harper, 1990; C. G. Jung, *The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga*. Edited with an introduction by Sonu Shamdasani. Bollengin Series. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press; London: Routledge, 1996; Grof, Stanislav, *Psychology of the future: Lessons from modern consciousness research*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2000; D'Aquili, Eugene G. & Andrew B. Newberg. *The mystical mind: Probing the biology of religious experience*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999.

[47] Taylor, E. I. *Shadow Culture: Psychology and spirituality in America*. Washington DC: Counterpoint Press, 2000.

[48] Taylor, E. I. William James on the demise of positivism in American psychology. In Rieber, R. and Salzinger, K. (eds) *Psychology: Theoretical and historical perspectives* (pp. 101–134). Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2nd ed., 1998.

Introduction: Section Two

The Return to James: Psychology, Religion and the Amnesia of Neuroscience[1]

Jeremy R. Carrette

> We had the experience but missed the meaning,
> And approach to the meaning restores the experience.
> T. S. Eliot 'The Dry Salvages', *Four Quartets*[2]

In the one hundred years since the publication of William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (hereafter *VRE*) the psychological study of religion has been endlessly transformed by the "varieties" of psychological theory. Psychoanalytical, behaviourist, humanistic, cognitive, social, evolutionary and neuro-scientific theories have all had their turn in shaping the subject since James delivered his seminal Gifford lectures in Edinburgh in 1901 and 1902. In each of the various theoretical fashions of psychology, religion has been subject to examination and been positively and negatively scrutinised. The space of the academic study of psychology and religion has in this time been

[1] The idea of a "return to James" is taken from J. M. Barbalet, who saw how a return to James's theory of emotion was necessary for a more comprehensive appreciation of his work within contemporary social psychology. See Barbalet, J. M., "William James' Theory of Emotions: Filling in the Picture" in *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 1999, pp. 251–266. The "return to James" in the present essay is in order to appreciate what is forgotten about James and to overcome "disciplined" readings, which ignore the archive and the complexity of his texts.

[2] "The Dry Salvages" from *Four Quartets* from *Collected Poems 1909–1962*, by T. S. Eliot, London, Faber & Faber Ltd., 1974, p. 195. © 1941 by T. S. Eliot and renewed by 1969 Esue Valerie Eliot, reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Inc., I would like to thank to Faber & Faber and Harcourt for permission to use this quotation.

neglected and resurrected, critiqued and refashioned, and, even, refined and obscured. It has been pulled between the demands of scientific endeavour and the socio-political reality of discourse, it has competed for institutional space and tested inter-disciplinary competence, and it has subverted and conformed to all sorts of ideologies. In its wake it has left a legacy to the political struggles of the Western world and its cultural interpretation of being human. Psychological theory is a reflection of the historical moments of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century, transforming itself in science, technology and the media to form ever-new ways of imagining the subject. There is no doubt that since James, religion and psychology have been points of contestation in the twentieth-century landscape, struggling to find a platform between philosophy, physiology and politics. The continual historical interrogation of knowledge leaves the subject searching for an identity in the collapsing and competing boundaries of disciplinary practice.

The memory of James in this history of the psychology of religion conveniently anchors the subject and provides justification for disciplinary demands, but at times this very remembrance is also an act of "disciplinary amnesia".[3] James can be historically remembered, pictures of him can hang in departments of psychology, his name echoed in textbooks on the methodology of religion, but his work is often forgotten in practice and his texts buried in the contemporary fetish of the new. It is the climate of such disciplinary amnesia that I wish draw out in relation to James's *VRE*, particularly with reference to the relatively new field of neuroscience and religion. Through such a consideration, I wish to show why the psychology of religion (including its branch of neuroscience) needs to return to James to consider it foundational practices.

DISCIPLINARY AMNESIA

The contemporary engagement between psychological theory and religion suffers from disciplinary amnesia, because it seeks to forget that which threatens it existence. Psychology is a discourse that seeks to suppress historical issues and problems in order to function as an authoritative discourse. The past needs to be forgotten because its legacy exposes the problems of the cohesion of the subject and its confused origins. The psychological subject wants to forget its history because its history uncovers the fragility of its disciplinary knowledge. If the contemporary field known as the "psychology of religion" (reconceived anxiously as "religious psychology" and "religious

[3] Carrette, J. R., "Post-Structuralism and the Psychology of Religion: The Challenge of Critical Psychology" in Jonte-Pace, D. and Parsons, W., Ed., 2001 *Religion and Psychology: Mapping the Terrain*, London: Routledge, 2001, pp. 110, 124.

VARIETIES OF RESPONSE TO JAMES

The limits of psychological knowledge can be seen in the reaction to the *VRE* itself, which has received a mixed reception over the hundred years since its publication in 1902. Its influence and impact on the field is extremely varied. The responses to James's *VRE* are themselves witness to the diversity of the field and the irregularities that foundational texts in the psychology of religion hold. According to David Wulff, the *VRE* did not so much offer a "prototype" for the psychology of religion as the "possibility of a viable psychology of religion".[16] This recognition of the provisionality of the subject is important and shows how James's work provides a context for future projects. As Troels Norager's excellent assessment of James's *VRE* reveals, "the truth is that modern psychology of religion has displayed ambivalent reactions to James".[17] Understanding this "ambivalence" is very important. James is not some super hero who solved all the problems of the field, we return to James because of the tensions and omissions are those from which the future basis of the subject can be built. What remains so rich about *VRE* is the way so many commentators can return to the text to discover ever-new ways of reading.[18] The contemporary space provides continual resources for re-examining James's insights, from cognitive science,[19] feminist analysis[20] postcolonial theory[21] and the history of the so-called New Age.[22]

David Wulff's annotated bibliography of the *VRE* gives a valuable overview of the critical reception of James's work up to 1995, but it is only in the last decade or so, and after 1995, that critical explorations have brought forth some of the strongest appraisal.[23] The development of different types of critical inquiry in the second half of the last century have produced sharp new readings of James's *VRE*. Any course examining the text will now consider — what have become — the "classic" contemporary criticisms of James's approach to religion: his "excessive individualism, privatism and

[16] Wulff, *Psychology and Religion*, p. 503.

[17] Norager, T., "Blowing Alternatively Hot and Cold: William James and the Complex Strategies" of *The Varieties* in Capps, D. & Jacobs, J. L., Ed., *The Struggle for Life: A Companion to William James's "The Varieties of Religious Experience"*, Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and Princeton Theological Seminary, 1995, p. 61.

[18] See, for example, Capps & Jacobs, *The Struggle for Life*; Lamberth, D. C., *William James and the Metaphysics of Experience*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

[19] Watts, F., "Psychological and Religious Perspectives on Emotion" in *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, Vol. 32, No. 2, June 1997, pp. 242–260.

[20] Jantzen, G., *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

[21] King, *Orientalism and Religion*.

[22] Barnard, G. W., "Diving into the Depths; Reflections on Psychology as a Religion" in Jonte-Pace and Parsons, *Religion and Psychology*, 2001, pp. 297–318.

[23] Wulff, D. M., "An Annotated Bibliography" on William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*' in Capps and Jacobs, *The Struggle for Life*, 1995, pp. 281–305.

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