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AN EXPLICATION OF WILLIAM JAMES' NEUTRAL MONISM
AND SOME APPLICATIONS TO HIS PRAGMATISM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of the Ohio State University

By

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* * * * * *

The Ohio State University
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express appreciation for the life and work of William James, which have made possible this interesting endeavor.
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INTRODUCTION

I

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, to provide an explication of William James' philosophical theory of neutral monism, and second, to set his neutral monism in relation to at least a portion of the remainder of his philosophical thought. The second part of this paper's purpose is pursued in terms of James' pragmatism, that is, affinities are sought between his neutral monism and pragmatism. It is James' pragmatism which is selected for this purpose primarily because his pragmatism, on the one hand, is often considered to most typify his thought, but on the other, is often treated as if it had little connection with his neutral monism. (An implicit contention of this paper, however, is that both of these ways of viewing James' thought are in a sense incorrect.)

II

The first three chapters contain the exposition of James' neutral monism. Chapter Four is an exposition of his pragmatism and an attempt to bring James' neutral monism and pragmatism into some sort of illuminating juxtaposition.
Chapter I is a general discussion of James' neutral monism. The attempt is made to delineate this theory and differentiate it from others by explicating several negative claims which it implies, viz.: minds do not differ from physical things as two substances; they do not differ in virtue of being composed of different kinds of elements; they do not differ in virtue of their qualities; and they are not in every instance numerically distinct.

Chapter II is a discussion of what seems the focal or fundamental element of James' neutral monism, viz., his notion of pure experience. Two interpretations of this notion are presented and then compared, viz., that pure experience is that which, when cognized as such is cognized 'immediately or intuitively,' and that pure experience is the 'given order' of experience. It is concluded that the former of these two notions is the more essential to James' neutral monism. The purpose of the first two chapters is to show that James' neutral monism is genuinely 'neutral' (neither a quasi-idealism nor a quasi-materialism), and in what sense this is so.

Chapter III is a discussion of the nature of the mental and physical orders, i.e., the nature of those relations in virtue of which a portion of pure experience assumes a mental or a physical nature. It is argued that portions of pure experience are mental when they occur as in 'continuous' relations which give rise to a perpetuation
and progression, and that they are physical when they occur as terms in 'causal' relations which are productive of sensible consequences.

Chapter IV is a discussion of James' pragmatism and its affinities with his neutral monism. Of these affinities which are discerned and discussed perhaps the most important is that as viewed against the background of James' neutral monism, his pragmatism is seen to be less 'humanistic' or 'tender-minded' than his formulations of the latter views might suggest. The experience which terminates the process of confirming a concept is also the immediate or intuitive cognition of some portion of pure experience, and the process itself is one involving relations in virtue of which that portion of pure experience is also a portion of physical reality.

III

Regarding the first part of the paper's purpose the following might be said. Rather late in his life James wrote a series of essays which seem to give a new tenor to his thought. What seems to be the best of these essays, at least with regard to what they reveal as to the new direction of his thought, are those written between July, 1904, and February, 1905, and published under the title of Essays in Radical Empiricism. These late essays are the mature fruit of James' thinking and an attempt to get his
intellectual house in order. Yet, this work was largely left unfinished due to James' death in 1910. What seems the central theme or thesis of these essays and their most original and provocative conception—if not also the most original and provocative contribution of James' writings as a whole—is James' neutral monism. In view of such considerations as these the project of this paper is one which can be both challenging in its endeavor and significant in its results.

The second part of the paper's purpose involves showing that James' neutral monism is in a sense basic to his pragmatism, that his neutral monism, though a latter deposition as it were, is nonetheless a deeper stratum of his thought. It is, however, consistent with this viewpoint that in some other sense James' pragmatism is the more fundamental position. But it might be noted in this connection that James' pragmatism, by his own acknowledgment, is not completely original with him, and that his presentation of it usually took the form of polemical essays and public lectures. It is thus indicated that James was primarily a champion of the cause of pragmatism rather than the source of its conception. There is thus some reason for supposing that James' pragmatism never became the focus or foundation of his completed thought.
IV

Some comments are called for regarding the approach or procedure adopted in this paper. This paper is intended to be expository rather than critical. The central concern is to state James' views and not to sit in judgment on them. However, consistent with this purpose a variety of arguments have been employed. These may be grouped in the following way:

I. Numerous passages from James' writings are quoted or referred to in order to show that either he does maintain or probably maintains a given view and to show in what that view consists.

II. Passages from James' writings are either quoted or referred to in order to show that a given view attributed to James is logically consistent with other views that the passages reveal that he maintains or probably maintains. The thrust of the argument here is that if a given view attributed to James is consistent with other of his views it is all the more likely that James maintains that view.

III. Arguments are sometimes used which are to show that a given view attributed to James has at least a prima facie cogency. The thrust of the argument is that if a given view attributed to James is inherently plausible it is all the more likely that he does in fact maintain that view.

IV. Arguments are sometimes used which are to show that
an objection which might be raised regarding a given view attributed to James is unsound. The thrust of such arguments is to show that the given view attributed to James has a prima facie cogency, but also, in rebutting the objection to show that it is founded on a misconception of what James' view is, and thereby, to further explicate that view.

V. Historical comparisons are frequently used as an expository device. That is to say, a given view attributed to James may be discussed in terms of how it compares with one held by some other figure in the history of philosophy. These comparisons are usually backwards rather than forwards, so to speak, it being assumed that James should not be held accountable in any way for subsequent developments in the history of philosophy. Further, most of these comparisons are with views held by classical empiricists. James' thinking was of course apparently influenced by and had it affinities with other historical currents of thought. Nonetheless, these comparisons were selected because they seemed the most illuminating.

This might seems an unnecessarily involved procedure for explicating James' views. However, since it is often not evident as to which of several views regarding a given issue is to be attributed to him, and precisely in what the view attributed to him consists, several arguments of various kind are often called for.
This introduction will conclude with a brief discussion of the problem of texts. A number of James' works, indeed, virtually all of his major works, have been used as a source of quotations and references. This procedure in effect presupposes a certain amount of continuity through the whole of James' writings. For example, as part of the exposition of James' neutral monism numerous references to his Principles of Psychology are made. Though the publication of the Principles of Psychology preceded that of the late essays by some fifteen years and is prefaced with the avowal of a dualistic viewpoint, many of the views set forth in this work appear to be consistent with James' neutral monism, and indeed, to be a sort of preparation for it. Further, since the Principles of Psychology is James' only full length book—being his magnum opus if ever he wrote one—it must be regarded as a basic text in virtually any discussion of James' philosophy.
CHAPTER I

The purpose of the present chapter is to explicate James' neutral monism by discussing several negative claims which the theory implies. These claims, stated briefly, are the following: minds do not differ from physical things as two substances; they do not differ in virtue of being composed of different kinds of elements; they do not differ in virtue of their qualities; and they are not in every instance numerically distinct.

At the outset I will for purposes of explication distinguish between pure experience, the conscious or mental, and the material or physical, for these notions are basic to my discussion.

It might also be advantageous here to indicate briefly the direction in which the arguments will move, i.e., to indicate in a general and preliminary manner the nature of that notion of pure experience, and of the mental, and of the physical, which will emerge in the course of this chapter and those to follow. James takes issue with both the absolute idealists and the atomistic empiricists in insisting that relations, as well as their relata, are an integral part of experience. Coupled with
James' radical empiricism (see Section I, iv, of this chapter), this implies that relations are real. Since, according to James, not only relations among the constituents of the physical world but those among states of consciousness are part of our experience (see Section II of Chapter I), these latter relations are also real. This view is of considerable significance with regard to the notions of pure experience, the mental, and the physical, for, according to James, as he is here interpreted, how an entity is to be categorized (i.e., as to whether it is mental, physical, or pure experience) is determined according to its relations, or lack of relations.

Thus the thesis put forth is that it is James' view that an entity is mental or physical, as the case may be--not in virtue of being, or inhering in, a substance of one kind or another, nor in virtue of possessing one quality or set of qualities rather than another, and so forth--but solely in virtue of the character of the relation or relations in which it is situated as a term (see Section III of Chapter I, and following). That is to say, an entity is physical (part of the physical world) because it is a relatum in a relation or set of relations of a certain kind, and an entity is mental (part of some mind) because it is a relatum in a relation or set of relations of another kind. (What distinguishes these two kinds of relations will be discussed in Chapter III.) Accordingly, an
entity can conceivably be simultaneously mental and physical, i.e., by being at some moment a term in relations of both these kinds (see Section IV of Chapter I). Apart from being a relatum in relations of either of these two kinds--being neither mental nor physical--an entity is pure experience (see Chapter II).

Section I

In his essay "Does Consciousness Exist" William James introduces his reader to the notion of pure experience with the following statements:

My thesis is that if we start with the supposition that there is only one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed, and if we call that stuff 'pure experience'; then knowing can easily be explained as a particular sort of relation towards one another into which portions of pure experience may enter. The relation itself is a part of pure experience; one of its 'terms' becomes the subject or bearer of the knowledge, the knower, the other becomes the object known.  

The passage begins with the supposition, "that there is only one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed." James designates this stuff 'pure experience.' This supposition implies that neither mind nor matter is of the nature of a primal stuff or material. Reality is not comprised of two basic

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stuffs, one mental, the other material; there is, rather, a single stuff of which everything--be it conscious or physical in character--is composed. This thesis will henceforth be designated 'neutral monism.' James states it in this way:

Common sense and popular philosophy are as dualistic as it is possible to be. Thoughts, we all naturally think, are made of one kind of substance, and things of another. . . . In opposition to this dualistic philosophy, I tried, in [the first essay] to show that thoughts and things are absolutely homogeneous as to their material. . . . There is no thought-stuff different from thing-stuff, I said; but the same identical piece of 'pure experience' (which was the name I gave to the materia prima of everything) can stand alternately for a 'fact of consciousness' or for a physical reality. . . .

One aspect of this claim is that James denies either mind or matter has the nature of a substance. The concept of substance which he rejects is set forth in the following passage:

Here is a bit of blackboard crayon. Its modes, attributes, properties, accidents, or affections,—use which term you will,—are whiteness, friability, cylindrical shape, insolubility in water, etc., etc. But the bearer of these attributes is so much chalk, which thereupon is called the substance in which they inhere. So the attributes of this desk inhere in the substance 'wood,' those of my coat in the substance 'wool,' and so forth. Chalk, wood and wool, show again, in spite of their differences, common properties, and in so far forth they are themselves counted as modes of a still more primal substance, matter, the attributes of which are space-occupancy and impenetrability. Similarly, our thoughts and feelings are affections

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2Ibid., pp. 137-138.
or properties of our several souls, which are substances, but again not wholly in their own right, for they are modes of the still deeper substance 'spirit.'

This is, of course, much the same concept of substance as that which Locke designates "the idea of substance in general" and delineates as:

... a supposition of he knows not what support of such qualities which are capable of producing simple ideas in us; which qualities are commonly called accidents.

James' criticism of this concept of substance is threefold. First, nothing corresponding to this concept is discoverable in experience. With regard to material substance, he maintains that the physical attributes—as opposed to something in which they inhere—are all that is manifested in sense-experience. He maintains that:

Now it was very early seen that all we know of the chalk is the whiteness, friability, etc., all we know of the wood is the combustibility and fibrous structure. A group of attributes is what each substance here is known as, they form its sole cash value for our actual experience. The substance is in every case revealed through them; if we were cut off from them we should never suspect its existence; and if God should keep sending them to us in an unchanged order, miraculously annihilating at a certain moment the substance that supported them,

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we never could detect the moment, for our experiences themselves would be unaltered.⁵

As for mental substance, he claims that introspection fails to reveal a substratum by which the content of consciousness is supported, i.e., a medium in which it is suspended. That is, he claims that:

. . . we are supposed by almost every one to have an immediate consciousness of consciousness itself. When the world of outer fact ceases to be materially present, and we merely recall it in memory, or fancy it, the consciousness is believed to stand out and to be felt as a kind of impalpable inner flowing, which, once known in this sort of experience, may equally be detected in presentations of the outer world. "The moment we try to fix our attention upon consciousness and to see what, distinctly, it is," says a recent writer, "it seems to vanish. It seems as if we had before us a mere emptiness. When we try to introspect the sensation of blue, all we can see is the blue; the other element is as if it were diaphanous. Yet it can be distinguished, if we look attentively enough, and know that there is something to look for." This supposes that the consciousness is one element, moment, factor--call it what you like--of an experience of essentially dualistic inner constitution, from which, if you abstract the content, the consciousness will remain revealed to its own eye. Experience, at this rate, would be much like a paint of which the world pictures were made. Paint has a dual constitution, involving, as it does, a menstruum (oil, size, or what not) and a mass of content in the form of pigment suspended therein. We can get the pure menstruum by letting the pigment settle, and the pure pigment by pouring off the size or oil. We operate here by physical substraction; and the usual view is, that by mental substraction we can separate the two factors of experience in an analogous way--not isolating them entirely, but distinguishing them enough to know that they are two. Now my contention is exactly the reverse of this.⁶

⁵James, Pragmatism, p. 66.
⁶James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, pp. 6-9.
Second, this concept of substance does not serve in any way to elucidate the nature of what is given in experience. Consider for example the following passage:

It is, in fact, with the word Soul as with the word Substance in general. To say that phenomena inhere in a substance is at bottom only to record one's protest against the notion that the bare existence of the phenomena is the total truth. A phenomenon would not itself be, we insist, unless there were something more than the phenomenon. To the more we give the provisional name of Substance. So, in the present instance, we ought certainly to admit that there is more than the bare fact of coexistence of a passing thought with a passing brain-state. But we do not answer the question 'What is that more' when we say that it is a 'Soul' which the brain-state affects. This kind of more explains nothing; and when we are once trying metaphysical explanations we are foolish not to go as far as we can.

Third, this concept of substance is superfluous. The endeavor to get somehow beyond or behind what is presented in experience in order to explain it is not only unavailing, but is unnecessary. Experience is coherent and comprehensible when taken on its own terms, for according to James:

In actual mosaics the pieces are held together by their bedding, for which bedding the Substances, transcendental Egos, or Absolutes of other philosophies may be taken to stand. In radical empiricism there is no bedding; it is as if the pieces clung together by their edges, the transitions experienced between them forming their cement. Of course such a metaphor is misleading, for in actual experience the more substantive and the more transitive parts run into each other continuously,

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there is in general no separateness needing to be overcome by an external cement; and whatever separateness is actually experienced is not overcome, it stays and counts as separateness to the end.  

iii

Although James discards the concept of substance as substratum for inhering states or attributes, he does propose that there is a meaningful way of conceiving substance. In discussing material substance, he presents the following view:

Matter is known as our sensations of color, figure hardness and the like. They are the cash-value of the term. The difference matter makes to us by truly being is that we can then get such sensations; by not being, is that we lack them. These sensations then are its sole meaning.

A parallel view of mental substance is offered in the following passage:

The unity, the identity, the individuality, and the immateriality that appear in the psychic life are thus accounted for as phenomenal and temporal facts exclusively, and with no need of reference to any more simple or substantial agent than the present Thought or 'section' of the stream . . . . The present Thought also has being--at least all believers in the Soul believe so--and if there is no other Being in which it 'inheres,' it ought itself to be a 'substance.'

Stated in general terms, material substance is here identified with the individual empirical properties of

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8James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, pp. 86-87.
9James, Pragmatism, p. 68.
10James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 344-45.
physical objects; and mental substance, with individual states of consciousness. In other words, a physical object is viewed as an assemblage of substances, these being its several sensible qualities, those of "color, figure, hardness and the like," and consciousness is viewed as a temporal succession of substances, each being "the present thought or 'section' of the stream."

James also identifies substance with the relations between these states and properties. Regarding material substance he submits that:

... the phenomenal properties of things . . . do not inhere in anything. They adhere, or cohere, rather, with each other, and the notion of a substance inaccessible to us, which we think accounts for such cohesion by supporting it, as cement might support pieces of mosaic, must be abandoned. The fact of the bare cohesion itself is all that the notion of the substance signifies. Behind that fact is nothing.\footnote{11}

For a parallel conception of mental substance, consider the following:

Locke, and later Hume, applied a similar pragmatic criticism to the notion of spiritual substance. I will only mention Locke's treatment of our 'personal identity.' He immediately reduces this notion to its pragmatic value in terms of experience. It means, he says, so much 'consciousness,' namely the fact that at one point of life we remember other moments, and feel them as parts of one and the same personal history . . . . his successor Hume, and most empirical psychologists after him, have denied the soul, save as the name for \textit{verifiable cohesions in our inner life}.\footnote{12}

\footnote{11}James, \textit{Pragmatism}, p. 66.
\footnote{12}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 68-69.
Thus the connections or coherence obtaining among the sensible properties of a physical object and those obtaining among the states of a single consciousness constitute, respectively, the substance of physical objects and minds.

It might be objected that by construing the concept of substance so as to denote states and properties and also the relations among such entities, James has vitiated his claim that "there is only one primal stuff or material." In other words, the dualism between mental and material stuff has been displaced by that between a term-stuff and a relation-stuff. Much as bricks and mortar differ as to their material make-up, so it might be argued, entities and their relations are of different stuffs. It should be noted that this objection does not undermine James' neutral monism, i.e., the notions of a thing-relation dualism and a mind-matter monism are not contradictory. In fact, his neutral monism will require this thing-relation distinction (i.e., that relations are real and aspects of experience) for its defense and explanation.

Further, James' thing-relation distinction is not that between two sorts of stuff. He maintains that:

To be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any
element that is directly experienced. For such a philosophy, the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as 'real' as anything else in the system.13 Accordingly, James must dismiss the concept of an underlying substratum, since this is an "element that is not directly experienced." On the other hand, he must admit the concept of substance as denoting both states or properties and the relations among them, in so far as they are experienced, since to do otherwise would be to "exclude . . . an element that is directly experienced." Further, he asserts that the relations among states or properties, as well as the states and properties themselves, are in fact experienced:

... the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive, are just as much matters of direct particular experience, neither more so nor less so, than the things themselves.14

Hence, "there is only one primal stuff" in James' view, viz., all that is "directly experienced."

Neither can it be claimed that James' view introduces two concepts of substance. Regarding the meaning of 'substance,' James states the following:

If we ask what Substance is, the only answer is that it is a self-existent being, or one which needs no other subject in which to inhere. At bottom its only positive determination is Being,

13 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 42.
and this is something whose meaning we all realize even though we find it hard to explain.\(^{15}\)

In casting aside the concept of an underlying substratum for states or properties James in effect commits himself to holding that the states and properties are "self-existent." However, it is less misleading to assert of substance that "its only positive determination is Being." That is to say, the addition of "self-existent" to "being" is redundant, since his criticism of the concept of a substratum reduces the meaning of "self-existent" to that of "existent." A substance "needs no other subject in which to inhere," in his view, simply because the existence of a "subject in which to inhere" has been denied. Thus, since James' radical empiricism commits him to claiming that everything "directly experienced" is "real," and conversely, 'substance' simply denotes whatever is "directly experienced."

\(^v\)

There is, however, a distinction to be drawn between mental states and physical properties, on the one hand, and on the other, the relations obtaining between them. This distinction will be elaborated in what follows (see, for example, Section III of this chapter), but it will be briefly indicated at this juncture. Borrowing\(^{15}\)

\(^{15}\)James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 344.
from James' mode of expression, the distinction is one between 'function' and 'fact.' To consider states of consciousness and the relations among them, or physical properties and their relations, as two coordinate kinds of entity is to conceive them as two sorts of 'fact.' But the relations perform the 'function' of unifying an individual consciousness or physical object, i.e., they provide for, or constitute, rather, the identity of minds and objects. That is: substance as that which gives identity to consciousness and physical things is that identity, or cohesion, which is experienced; substance as that which is self-existent, or simply, existent, is these experienced cohesive relations and the states or properties they relate.

The significance of the distinction— for James' neutral monism— is that substance as relations corresponds to James' conception of the nature of mind and matter, as states and properties, to James' way of conceiving the nature of pure experience. Pure experience accounts only for the existence of conscious and physical entities, i.e., that there are conscious and physical entities presupposes a stuff or material. However, that certain entities are conscious, or, on the other hand, physical, i.e., what they are in this respect, is not to be explained in terms of one kind of stuff rather than another, but in terms of how a single stuff is organized by its relations.
In summary, it can be asserted that James explicitly and consistently rejects the concept of substance as a substratum underlying, supporting, and conjoining states or properties. It might be said that he removes the husk and retains the kernel of that concept of substance which he rejects, viz., that of something in which empirical attributes inhere. The subsistence of the attributes and the identity of the larger entities they compose can be maintained without taking recourse to such a concept. It follows that James denies that either mind or matter is such a substance. Thus at least part of what he is asserting in the opening clause of the first quotation in Section I of this chapter ("there is only one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed") is that there are not two substances, the one mental and the other material, and that neither a material or mental substratum is the "one primal stuff or material . . . of which everything is composed." That is to say, in so far as metaphysical dualism, idealism, and materialism presuppose a substratum, James rejects all three of these positions. Furthermore, it follows that James denies that either mind or matter inhere in such a substance. Thus he is also asserting that pure experience if not of the nature of an underlying substratum, i.e., the "one primal stuff or material in the world" is not a
substance, in which both conscious and physical states or properties inhere, thereby forming, respectively, either conscious or physical things.

Section II

A second aspect of James' neutral monism is one to the effect that consciousness is not formed of mental elements, differing in kind from those composing material things. James labels the view that there are such mental atoms the "theory of ideas" and describes the view thus:

The aim of science is always to reduce complexity to simplicity; and in psychological science we have the celebrated 'theory of ideas' which, admitting the great difference among each other of what may be called concrete conditions of mind, seeks to show how this is all the resultant effect of variations in the combination of certain simple elements of consciousness that always remain the same. These mental atoms or molecules are what Locke called 'simple ideas.'

Reduced to its simplest terms, this theory maintains that there are a number of kinds of conscious elements some of which compose any portion of consciousness. Or stated differently, it maintains that any portion of consciousness is completely analyzable into elementary contents, contents that recur in other portions of consciousness. The theory is presented in passages from Locke such as the following:

Though the qualities that affect our senses are, in the things themselves, so united and blended that there is no separation, no distance between them; yet it is plain the ideas they produce in the mind enter by the senses simple and unmixed. For though the sight and touch often take in from the same object, at the same time, different ideas—as a man sees at once motion and colour, the hand feels softness and warmth in the same piece of wax—yet the simple ideas thus united in the same subject are as perfectly distinct as those that come in by different senses; the coldness and hardness which a man feels in a piece of ice being as distinct ideas in the mind as the smell and whiteness of a lily, or as the taste of sugar and smell of a rose; and there is nothing can be plainer to a man than the clear and distinct perception he has of those simple ideas; which, being each in itself uncompounded, contains in it nothing but one uniform appearance or conception in the mind, and is not distinguishable into different ideas.\(^1\)

Nor will it be so strange to think these few simple ideas sufficient to employ the quickest thought or largest capacity, and to furnish the materials of all that various knowledge and more various fancies and opinions of all mankind, if we consider how many words may be made out of the various composition of twenty-four letters; or, if, going one step farther, we will but reflect on the variety of combinations may be made with barely one of the above-mentioned ideas, viz., number whose stock is inexhaustible and truly infinite; and what a large and immense field doth extension alone afford the mathematicians!\(^2\)

James denies both the theses set forth here, viz., both that conscious states are atomic and that they are recurrent. According to James, conscious states succeed each other in a continuous succession, i.e., they do not connect with one another, they coalesce, forming a "stream

\(^1\)Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding, I, 144-45.

\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 164-65.
of consciousness." He maintains that:

Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as 'chain' or 'train' do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are metaphors by which it is most naturally described. 19 Yet all these parts leave its [the perceptual flux] unity unbroken. Its boundaries are no more distinct than are those of the field of vision. Boundaries are things that intervene; but here nothing intervenes save parts of the perceptual flux itself, and these are overflowed by what they separate so that whatever we distinguish and isolate conceptually is found perceptually to telescope and compensate and diffuse into its neighbors. 20

James' contention here is not merely that states of consciousness are integrated (rather than concatenated) to form a genuine whole, for a whole can surely be resolved into its parts. He maintains that each conscious state has a "psychic overtone, suffusion, or fringe." 21 Rather than being definite and discrete each conscious state includes a dim or peripheral consciousness of the larger whole of which it forms a part, i.e., of other conscious states to which it is related. A conscious state has a context, so to speak, "some topic or subject about which all the members of a thought resolve" 22—which is a part of

19 James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 239.
21 James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 258.
22 Ibid., p. 259.
that conscious state. Furthermore, among the relations between conscious states, at least some are 'within' consciousness, are themselves conscious states. James distinguishes between the "substantive parts" of the stream of thought and its "transitive parts." The latter are "a passage, a relation, a transition from it, or between it [a substantive part of the stream] and something else."\(^23\) Accordingly James in effect argues that there are no separations within the stream of consciousness between its parts and some larger whole which they compose, or between the parts themselves.

James claims that consciousness is a source or site of novelty, that "no [conscious] state once gone can recur and be identical with what has gone before."\(^24\) He asserts that:

A permanently existing 'idea' or 'Vorstellung' which makes its appearance before the footlights of consciousness at periodical intervals, is as mythological an entity as the Jack of Spades.\(^25\)

If we take concrete perceptual experience, the question can be answered in only one way, 'The same returns not, save to bring the different.' Time keeps budding into new moments, every one of which presents a content which in its individuality never was before and will never be again. Of no concrete bit of experience was an exact duplicate ever framed.\(^26\)

\(^{23}\)Ibid., p. 243.

\(^{24}\)Ibid., p. 230.

\(^{25}\)Ibid., p. 236.

\(^{26}\)James, *Some Problems of Philosophy*, p. 147.
James also disclaims the theory regarding the character of consciousness which he terms the "mind-dust theory." Though similar, the two theories differ, according to James, in that the "mind-dust theory" is proposed primarily in order to account for the emergence of mind in the process of organic evolution, whereas the "theory of ideas" is solely an attempt to account for the nature of human consciousness in its present form. The "mind-dust theory" can be summarized thus:

Each atom of the nebula, they suppose, must have had an aboriginal atom of consciousness linked with it; and, just as the material atoms have formed bodies and brains by massing themselves together, so the mental atoms, by an analogous process of aggregation, have fused into those larger consciousnesses which we know in ourselves and suppose to exist in our fellow-animals. 27

In a sense the "mind-dust theory" is even more thorough-going in its mental atomism than is the "theory of ideas," in that it proposes "a single primordial element of consciousness" of which all consciousness is compounded. James explicates the theory with a quotation from Spencer, part of which reads as follows:

There may be a single primordial element of consciousness, and the countless kinds of consciousness may be produced by the compounding of this element with itself and the compounding of its compounds with one another in higher and higher degrees: so producing increased multiplicity, variety, and

27 James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 149.
James argues—as he does against the "theory of ideas"—that consciousness is not a compound of mental atoms. His arguments are many and lengthy but what seems the most important one runs in part as follows:

All the 'combinations' which we actually know are EFFECTS, wrought by the units said to be 'combined,' UPON SOME ENTITY OTHER THAN THEMSELVES. Without this feature of a medium or vehicle, the notion of combination has no sense. .

In other words, no possible number of entities (call them as you like, whether forces, material particles, or mental elements) can sum themselves together. Each remains, in the sum, what it always was: and the sum itself exists only for a bystander who happens to overlook the units and to apprehend the sum as such; or else it exists in the shape of some other effect on an entity external to the sum itself.

In general it might be said that in arguing against the "theory of ideas" in Chapter 9 of the Principles of Psychology he claims that the content of consciousness cannot be analyzed into atoms, and in dealing with the "mind-dust theory" in Chapter 7, he claims that there is no intelligible process by which atoms could be synthesized by the mind.

Moreover, if feelings can mix into a tertium quid, why do we not take a feeling of greenness and a feeling of redness, and make a feeling of yellowness out of them? Why has optics neglected the open road to truth, and wasted centuries in disputing about theories of color-composition which two minutes of introspection would have settled forever? We cannot

28 Ibid., p. 152.
29 Ibid., pp. 158-159.
mix feelings as such, though we may mix the objects we feel, and from their mixture get new feelings. We cannot even (as we shall later see) have two feelings in our mind at once. At most we can compare together objects previously presented to us in distinct feelings; but then we find each object stubbornly maintaining its separate identity before consciousness, whatever the verdict of the comparison may be.\textsuperscript{30}

iii

The preceding discussion of psychological atomism may prompt the following objection: the claim that consciousness is not formed of atoms implies that consciousness is in fact constituted of a stuff different in kind from that of the physical world, for it would seem that physical things are composed of atoms of some sort. An artifact need not be composed of parts or pieces, it might be molded from a whole and homogeneous material. In a somewhat analogous way, might not consciousness be of a mental stuff, a stuff having no ultimate parts, only arbitrarily selectable portions? James' use of the phrase "stream of consciousness" seems to suggest as much. The water flowing in a stream has no macroscopic parts; one obtains a completely arbitrary quantum of water, when filling a gallon pail from the stream. Conceived in this fashion the stuff of consciousness differs from the atomistic stuff composing the physical world.

But this line of argument leaves both its flanks

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., pp. 157-158.
open to attack. First of all, James does not appear to maintain that the physical world is discontinuous or composed of atoms. Consider, for example, the following statement:

The essence of things for science is not to be what they seem, but to be atoms and molecules moving to and from each other according to strange laws. . . . The order of scientific thought is quite incongruent either with the way in which reality exists or with the way in which it comes before us.\(^{31}\)

Secondly, James' thesis that consciousness is continuous is used in the argument in a misleading manner. To assert that consciousness is continuous is not to say what it is composed of, but rather, how it is composed, i.e., it is to assert something about its structure rather than its stuff. Whether it flows continuously or falls in drops makes no difference to the fact that it is water that is issuing from a faucet. This point is important for the following reason. James—as will be later argued at length—maintains that conscious and physical entities differ in virtue of being terms in distinct kinds of relations. The conscious or mental character of an entity is thus, roughly speaking, a matter of structure. Consequently, it would be confusing, to say the least, to assimilate the concept of stuff to that of structure, as does the above objection.

Furthermore, to think of James' view of conscious-

\(^{31}\)Ibid., II, 633-34.
ness in terms of a whole and homogeneous material can be misleading. The stream of consciousness is a temporal stream, a flow of events. James is adamant in his defense of the reality of time, and regards as grotesque any view of reality which does not grant to time a central place in the scheme of things:

The doctrine on which the absolutists lay most stress is the absolute's 'timeless' character. For pluralists, on the other hand, time remains as real as anything, and nothing in the universe is great or static or eternal enough not to have some history. But the world that each of us feels most intimately at home with is that of beings with histories that play into our history, whom we can help in their vicissitudes even as they help us in ours.32

A physical stream, on the other hand, is also spatial, having length, width, and depth, as well as a rate of flow. If the analogy of a stream is to be employed in describing consciousness, the best one can do is to think of the stream as coming into existence at one point, and passing out of existence at a second point a short distance 'downstream' from the first (corresponding in consciousness to the distance between the two points on the stream's bank is perhaps the 'specious present'). Thus the continuity of consciousness is not really that of a whole and homogeneous material, comparable to the single body of water filling the entire extent of the stream's

bed. It is, rather, a temporal continuity, i.e., the thought of the moment is felt as a prolongation of the past thought and a premonition of the future thought. In other words, in his use of the phrase "stream of consciousness," James wishes to suggest that consciousness flows, not that it is composed of some fluid-like stuff:

Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as 'chain' or 'train' do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. . . . In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life.  

At this point it can be said that James maintains that there is no mental stuff in which consciousness inheres, and no mental stuff of which it is 'built-up' or compounded. Conscious states inhere, as it were, in their own cohesive relations with one another, and these relations weld these states into a continuous stream. This view of the nature of mind or consciousness appears, however, to contain the following inconsistency. James claims, on the one hand, that relations are distinct from the entities they relate (see above, Section I, iii, and following of this chapter). Thus a distinction is to be made between conscious states and their relations to one

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33 James, *Principles of Psychology*, I, 239.
another. This would seem to imply that conscious states are discrete rather than continuous. On the other hand, it has been asserted above that James holds the view that consciousness is continuous. In other words, James does not seem to succeed in abandoning both the concepts of mental substance and mental atoms. He can deny that there is a substance in which states inhere only by acknowledging relations between them, in virtue of which they mutually cohere, and thereby, the distinction between the states and their relations. This, however, appears to leave the way open to identifying these states with some sort of mental atoms.

James' view of consciousness is not altogether clear, but the following considerations can be adduced in its defense. It would seem that James tends to overstate his arguments against psychological atomism. It is sufficient to refute the position that conscious elements are the primal stuff of consciousness, i.e., that consciousness consists exclusively of such elements, to show that both these elements and their various relations with each other comprise consciousness, i.e., that consciousness consists of both its "substantive parts" and its "transitive parts" (see above, Section I, i, of this chapter). Given James' radical empiricism in order for portions of consciousness to be related the relations must themselves be part of consciousness, i.e., one must be capable
of being conscious of both mental states and relations between them. This reduces to an absurdity the position that consciousness consists only of its elements, i.e., it follows that those elements are in no way related.

A further consideration is that James tends to confuse for his reader two distinctions between kinds of relations. A distinction between a relation's being intimate and its being internal is recognized by James but not clearly made. That is to say, relations are to be distinguished, on the one hand, as internal or external, and on the other hand as to whether or not (or to what degree) they are intimate.

Consider, for example, the following passage from James' writings:

The first duty of radical empiricism, taking given conjunctions at their face-value, is to class some of them as more intimate and some as more external. When two terms are similar, their very natures enter into the relation. Being what they are, no matter where or when, the likeness never can be denied, if asserted. It continues predicable as long as the terms continue. Other relations, the where and the when, for example, seem adventitious. The sheet of paper may be 'off' or 'on' the table, for example; and in either case the relation involves only the outside of its terms. Having an outside, both of them, they contribute by it to the relation. It is external: the term's inner nature is irrelevant to it. Any book, any table, may fall into the relation, which is created pro hac vice, not by their existence, but by their casual situation.34

The distinction involved here is that between internal

34James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, pp. 109-110.
and external relations:

The point is whether the successive relations 'on' and 'not-on' can rationally (not physically) hold of the same constant terms, abstractly taken.35

Internal relations, merely by obtaining between entities, modify them, i.e., necessitate something about the qualities of those entities, whereas, external relations do not (see below, Section III, ii, of this chapter). Thus James acknowledges the distinction between internal and external relations and maintains that some relations are external.

On the other hand, consider the following passage:

Relations are of different degrees of intimacy. Merely to be 'with' one another in a universe of discourse is the most external relation that terms can have, and seems to involve nothing whatever as to farther consequences. Simultaneity and time-interval come next, and then space-adjacency and distance. After them, similarity and difference, carrying the possibility of many inferences. Then relations of activity, tying terms into series involving change, tendency, resistance, and the causal order generally. Finally, the relation experienced between terms that form states of mind, and are immediately conscious of continuing each other. The organization of the Self as a system of memories, purposes, strivings, fulfillments or disappointments, is incidental to this most intimate of all relations, the terms of which seem in many cases actually to compenetrate and suffuse each other's being.36

The distinction involved here is not that between internal and external relations, for, according to James, similarity

35 Ibid., p. 111.
36 Ibid., pp. 44-45.
is an internal relation (see the immediately preceding quotation) and that between conscious states, external.

Regarding this latter claim he states, for example, that:

Consciousness connotes a kind of external relation, and does not denote a special stuff or way of being. The peculiarity of our experiences, that they not only are, but are known, which their 'conscious' quality is invoked to explain, is better explained by their relations--these relations themselves being experiences--to one another.37

If we are empiricists and go from parts of wholes, we believe that beings may first exist and feed so to speak on their own existence, and then secondarily become known to one another. . . . This assumption, which amounts to saying that it need make no essential difference to the royal object whether the feline subject cognize him or not, that the cat may look away from him or may even be annihilated, and the kind remain unchanged. . . .38

Thus James is here in effect describing some distinction between relations other than that between internal and external relations (and for this distinction James' term 'intimate' will be reserved in what is to follow).

That the distinction between intimate relations and those that are not is not the same as that between internal and external relations can be shown by means of some examples. Consider a row of books on a shelf. It would be somewhat appropriate to say that a relation between two adjacent books, viz., that portions of their surfaces are contiguous, is an intimate one, that it is,

37James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 25.
38James, A Pluralistic Universe, p. 61.
for example, more intimate than the spatial relation between the books at either end of the row. Though an intimate relation, contiguity is not an internal relation. On the other hand, two adjacent books on the shelf might have virtually nothing in common with respect to their contents, in which case it could be said that they are not intimately related as to their topics. But the relation here of difference is an internal relation. The most appropriate use of 'intimate,' as least as far as conventional usage of the term goes, is perhaps to describe certain personal relations, relations obtaining between persons rather than things. Yet with this use of the term the distinction between intimate and internal relations is even more evident. Surely one and the same person can be a friend, a spouse, a parent, and so forth. (As the above examples indicate, the notion of an intimate relation which James employs is a quite general one applying to relations obtaining between various sorts of entities, even though it is perhaps derived by generalizing upon the familiar use of 'intimate' to describe certain kinds of personal relationships. The case here is perhaps analogous to that regarding James' notion of 'knowledge of acquaintance' and the familiar notion of being acquainted with another person. See below, Chapter II, I, x.)

Thus far it has been argued that a distinction can be drawn between intimate and internal relations--and that
James implicitly makes such a distinction—and the distinction has been exemplified. But in what does this distinction consist? There is a difficulty in stating the distinction, but by commenting on this difficulty the distinction itself may be somewhat clarified. First of all, and as a consequence of James' radical empiricism, direct experience is of relations as well as such things as are related and our cognition of such relations is ultimately a matter of 'knowledge of acquaintance' (see above, Chapter II, I, viii). Although from a strictly logical point of view separation or difference, for example, is no less a relation than union or similarity, in or for our experience there is an obvious difference—though one difficult to state—and one such that the latter relations are felt to 'connect' things, whereas the former are felt to 'disconnect' them. What have been termed 'intimate relations' are those relations which are felt to 'connect' their terms, which give to our experience a feeling of closeness and coherence among things. Secondly, involved in this distinction, at least by way of basis or background, is the monism-pluralism controversy and James' polemics with the absolute idealists. James' opponents had argued in effect that the only sorts of relations which could make a unity of the world's plurality were internal relations. But this is to confuse contingency with disconnection. Or
it is at least to suppose that some sort of 'necessary connections' are the only relations which can genuinely 'connect' their terms. For example, having seen two copies of the same book one can immediately infer or conceptually intuit—and with certainty and without taking recourse to experience—that the relation of similarity obtains between them. However, from this alone one cannot know that they are, for example, presently placed side by side in the bookshelf. But this is not to say that the latter relations fail to genuinely 'connect' the two books, for it does so for our experience. In other words, the question of the world's 'oneness' or 'manyness' involves that of the amount and degree of intimacy which the world's relations bestow upon their terms.

James maintains that some relations are external, and at least some of these external relations are what have been designated here as intimate. Further, James claims that the relations among conscious states, or at least those which account for their being 'conscious,' are external relations. Thus James' view, as expressed in the passage quoted above on page 34, is apparently that continuity is a relation of a very high degree of intimacy, being, for example, yet more intimate than that of contiguity, but is not internal. Continuity is thus not different in kind from other intimate relations; intimacy is a relation which admits of degrees ("Relations are of
different degrees of intimacy"), and continuity, (that is, as it is experienced--it is, of course, not the mathematical notion of continuity which is concerned here\(^{39}\) is surely something like the ultimate degree of intimacy ("The organization of the Self as a system of memories, purposes, strivings, fulfillments or disappointments, is incidental to this most intimate of all relations.").

In contrast, there are apparently no degrees of internality or externality, i.e., no continuum or spectrum of external and internal relations. The temptation to confound internal and intimate relation is more easily resisted once the essential similarity of continuity and other intimate relations is seen.

The importance of the above discussion is that with regard to internal relations, the relation and what it relates, i.e., the terms of the relation, cannot be clearly differentiated. F. H. Bradley, for example, claims that all relations are internal:

But every relation, as we have learnt, essentially penetrates the being of its terms, and, in this sense, is intrinsical; or, in other words, every relation must be a relation of content.\(^{40}\)

He concludes that:

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\(^{39}\)See, for example, Our Knowledge of the External World, by Bertrand Russell, Lecture V, for a discussion of the mathematical notion of continuity.

... a relational way of thought—any one that moves by the machinery of terms and relations—must give appearance, and not truth. It is a makeshift, a device, a mere practical compromise, most necessary, but in the end most indefensible.

And James accepts the force of this inference:

I have heard this reason [a term taken in a second relation can not logically be the same term which it was at first] urged so often in discussing with absolutists, and it would destroy my radical empiricism so utterly, if it were valid, that I am bound to give it an attentive ear, and seriously to search its strength.

Regarding external relations, however, such a differentiation is always possible. Thus James' view of consciousness as continuous is consistent with a distinction between states of consciousness and the relations between them, i.e., it is compatible with maintaining that these relations are external.

James must of course maintain that these relations are in some way experienced since this is implied by his radical empiricism. The denial of this position might take either of two forms. It might simply be asserted that, as a matter of fact, no relations of continuity are experienced as a part of consciousness. James, however, claims the following:

What I do feel simply when a later moment of my experience succeeds an earlier one is that though there are two moments, the transition from the one

41Ibid., p. 28.

42James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 101.
to the other is continuous. Continuity here is a
definite form of experience. . . .43

On the other hand, it might be claimed that continuity is
such that it could not be an object of experience. If
the successive pulses of consciousness have no discern-
able separations, and even overlap and interpenetrate one
another—so the argument goes—nothing can be experienced
as overcoming the separation, viz., relations between
them. In the case of continuous relations, however, their
being experienced consists in there being no experienced
separations. The argument is the result of conceiving
relations as a sort of coupling between things experienced
as separate. As regards the logic of relations, relations
do not stand between their terms after the fashion of
something that intervenes and as regards our experience of
relations, this in no sense need be the case. Generally
speaking, the peculiarity of intimate relations is that
nothing is experienced as interjacent to those things rela-
ted. To recur to the example of the two adjacent books on
the shelf, their contiguity is not experienced as some-
thing's being between them—but precisely the contrary.

As was stated above (see page 30), the continuity
which James attributes to consciousness is essentially a

43Ibid., p. 49.
temporal continuity. He states that:

The 'passing' moment is . . . the minimal fact, with the 'apparation of difference' inside of it as well as outside. If we do not feel both past and present in one field of feeling, we feel them not at all. We have the same many-in-one in the matter that fills the passing time.44

The relation between thoughts past, present, and future is yet an external relation. To say that one thought is before or after another is not to assert anything concerning the contents of these thoughts. Even if it is to be maintained that the thoughts "penetrate" and "pass into"45 each other, it does not follow that the thoughts and their relations do.

This point is perhaps obscured due to certain passages in which James describes the experience of time, passages which suggest that portions of the past and future are somehow contained in the present. For example:

. . . the practically cognized present is no knife-edge, but a saddle-back, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched, and from which we look in two directions into time. The unit of composition of our perception of time is a duration, with a bow and a stern, as it were--a rearward--and a forward-looking end.46

However, it is the "specious present" which he describes in this way, which is not, though it so seems, entirely

44James, A Pluralistic Universe, p. 283.
45Bradley, Appearance and Reality, pp. 347, 322.
46James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 609.
present. It is, rather, "a duration" including portions of the past and future as well as the present. Thus, even within the "specious present," past, present, and future are distinguishable, even though they are here experienced as together. Accordingly, James continues:

It is only as parts of this duration-block that the relation of succession of one end to the other is perceived. We do not first feel one end and then feel the other after it, and from the perception of the succession infer an interval of time between, but we seem to feel the interval of time as a whole, with its two ends embedded in it. The experience is from the outset a synthetic datum, not a simple one; and to sensible perception its elements are inseparable, although attention looking back may easily decompose the experience, and distinguish its beginning from its end.47

Thus, it can be maintained in James' behalf that portions of experience, past, present, and future, are intimately ("as parts of this duration-block") though externally (since "the relation of succession" does not qualify the nature of its terms) related.48

Thus central to James' view of relations as they obtain within consciousness is the notion of process. As against the atomistic empiricists James wants to conserve the notion of experience as being continuous; and as against the absolute idealists, to preserve his pluralism. To approach the problem in terms of conceiving experience

47 Ibid., pp. 609-10.

as a process offers some hope of success: "pluralism and immanence are reconciled in this form of temporalism." Viewed in this way each pulse or section of the stream of thought has a double aspect, as it were. Each is independently real in that each is all that exists of the stream during that interval of time. Yet on the other hand, in that in each the future is felt to grow and the past fade, a continuity does obtain within the stream of thought.

vi

A further and greater difficulty with the notion of continuity as applied to consciousness lies in James' way of describing the relations among the individual pulses of thought such that an 'identical' or 'personal' stream of thought is composed. One of these relations, and perhaps the most important and most puzzling, is that which he terms 'appropriation,' and describes as follows:

Each pulse of cognitive consciousness, each Thought, dies away and is replaced by another. The other, among the things it knows, knows its own predecessor, and finding it 'warm,' in the way we have described, greets it, saying: "Thou art mine, and part of the same self with me." Each later Thought, knowing and including thus the Thoughts which went before, is the final receptacle--and appropriating them is the final owner--of all that they contain and own. Each Thought is thus born an owner, and dies owned, transmitting whatever it realized as its Self to its own

later proprietor.\textsuperscript{50}

The nature of 'appropriation' is none too clear. In describing this 'appropriation' James uses a variety of terms; for example, in the passage quoted immediately above, he asserts that the present Thought knows its predecessor, includes or contains it, owns it, and so forth. Some of these terms (for example, 'includes' and 'contains') may suggest that one thought actually comes to include or contain another in such a way that they are numerically the same thought. Such a view would surely be inconsistent with the claim that the relations within consciousness are external relations. What James seems to be maintaining, however, is that the content of the predecessor is what comes to be 'included in' the present Thought. The past Thought genuinely perishes, it does not live on, as it were, in the midst of the present Thought:

But the Thought is perishing and not an immortal or incorruptible thing. Its successors may continuously succeed to it, resemble it, and appropriate it, but they are not it, whereas the Soul-Substance is supposed to be a fixed unchanging thing.\textsuperscript{51}

James describes or depicts 'appropriation' with the aid of the simile of "a herd of cattle let loose for the winter on some wide western prairie":\textsuperscript{52}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[50]James, \textit{The Principles of Psychology}, I, 339.
\item[51]Ibid., I, 345.
\item[52]Ibid., I, 337.
\end{footnotes}
the beasts were brought together into one herd because their owner found on each of them his brand. The 'owner' symbolizes here that 'section' of consciousness, or pulse of thought, which we have all along represented as the vehicle of the judgment of identity; and the 'brand' symbolizes the characters of warmth and continuity, by reason of which the judgment is made. There is found a self-brand, just as there is found a herd-brand. Each brand, so far, is the mark, or cause of our knowing, that certain things belong together. The individual beasts do not stick together, for all that they wear the same brand. Each wanders with whatever accidental mates it finds. The herd's unity is only potential, its centre ideal, like the 'centre of gravity' in physics, until the herdsman or owner comes. He furnishes a real centre of accretion to which the beasts are driven and by which they are held. The beasts stick together by sticking severally to him.\text{\textsuperscript{53}}

For how would it be if the Thought, the present judging Thought, instead of being in any way substantially or transcendentally identical with the former owner of the past self, merely inherited his 'title,' and thus stood as his legal representative now? It would then, if its birth coincided exactly with the death of another owner, find the past self already its own as soon as it found it at all, and the past self would thus never be wild, but always owner, by a title that never lapsed. We can imagine a long succession of herdsmen coming rapidly into possession of the same cattle by transmission of an original title by bequest. May not the 'title' of a collective self be passed from one Thought to another in some analogous way?\text{\textsuperscript{54}}

A different simile may further illuminate the nature of 'appropriation.' Imagine driving up a mountain road and stopping briefly but frequently to view the scenery, the landscape below. The road, it will be imagined, lies more or less straight up the mountainside to its summit (rather

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., I, 337.

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid., I, 339.
than spiraling up the mountain), and has 'overlooks' at frequent and more or less regular intervals, which offer a good view of the terrain below. Thus what is seen from each succeeding 'overlook,' as one travels the road up the mountain in this way, is what was seen from the immediately preceding 'overlook,' though as more distant, perhaps in a slightly different perspective and so forth, and as contained or included, as it were, in the present one: since the scene from each succeeding 'overlook' will 'take in' a wider view (because from a higher elevation) of the same terrain below. Now, one feels a continuity between each scene and the immediately preceding one. If, for example, the various scenes were somehow transposed (as photographs taken at the 'overlooks' might be), this feeling of continuity would be lost. Each successive scene may be compared to "the present Thought" and the relation between "the present Thought" and its predecessor to that between a scene and the preceding one. (The active role of "the present Thought" in itself appropriating its predecessor will not be discussed at this point. See below, Section II, vii, Chapter III.)

In order to make the analogy appropriate, the ride between--to and from--the 'overlooks' must be disregarded, since it constitutes a 'break' in this felt continuity (it being assumed that the driver is watching the road instead of the scenery). Thus it is not the traveling of
this road to which the continuity of consciousness is being compared here—though the road is a continuous extent of pavement to the mountain's summit—but the scenes at the successive overlooks. The road, which connects these overlooks, is on the other hand, perhaps comparable to "an Arch-Ego, dominating the entire stream of thought and all the selves that may be presented in it."\textsuperscript{55} But this is an entity or principle which James claims to dispense with.\textsuperscript{56} In other words, the continuity of experience is felt in and as a part of portions of experience (see above, second quotation on page 14).

There is some doubt, however, as to whether the relation of continuity between two successive scenes is external. An adequate treatment of the problem would require extended discussion, but only one point will be made here. The relation felt between two successive scenes is not that of continuity pure and simple. The felt relation between successive scenes if taken in reverse order—on the way back down the mountain—would be different. This difference might be described in a crude way by saying that the successive scenes on the way up the mountain give a sense of expansion (growth, accumulation, 'of more'), whereas on the way down, a sense of contrac-

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{55}}\textit{Ibid.}, I, 338.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., I, 338 ff.}
tion. Analogously, James explains regarding the appropriations of "the present Thought" that:

... let A, B, and C stand for three successive thoughts, each with its object inside of it. If B's object be A, and C's object be B; then A, B, and C would stand for three pulses in a consciousness of personal identity. Each pulse would be something different from the others; but B would know and adopt A, and C would know and adopt A and B.57

This aspect of the stream of thought has been described by saying that each section of the stream 'includes' or 'contains' its predecessor. But as G. E. Moore has pointed out regarding spatial parts and wholes:

In other words, though every relational property of the form "having this for a spatial part" is "internal" in our sense, it seems equally clear that every property of the form "is a spatial part" is "internal" in our sense, it seems equally clear that every property of the form "is a spatial part of this whole" is not internal, but purely external. Yet this last, according to me, is one of the things which the dogma of internal relations denies. It implies that it is just as necessary that anything, which is in fact a part of a particular whole, should be a part of that whole, as that any whole, which has a particular thing for a part, should have that thing for a part.58

Thus, it seems plausible to argue that although each section of the stream is internally related to the content of a preceding section which it 'includes' or 'contains,' that included content is externally related to that section. It is this latter point which is essential, in order that

57Ibid., I, 342.

each pulse of thought, as present and living, be contingent and undetermined by the nature of some larger whole.

Or as James states the matter:

If we are empiricists and go from parts of wholes, we believe that beings may first exist and feed, so to speak, on their own existence, and then secondarily become known to one another. 59

The preceding discussion of this section (with the exception of iii) deals directly with James' view that consciousness is of the nature of a continuous stream and not a succession of atomic elements, rather than his view that the constituent entities of this stream are not per se mental. But the two views are interrelated and such that the preceding discussion also concerns the latter view. Stated briefly and to be explicated in later portions of this paper, the interrelation is somewhat as follows. First of all, regarding the issue of internal and external relations, the relations between entities in virtue of which they compose a stream of thought must be external relations in order that the distinction between the mental and physical can be made in terms of a difference of relations (see below, Section III, ii, of this chapter), and also in order that the entities thus related by genuinely 'pure' or 'neutral' (neither physical nor

59 James, A Pluralistic Universe, p. 61.
mental). Since internal relations 'modify' or 'quality' the nature of their terms, to allow the relations in virtue of which entities are mental or physical to be internal is to raise doubts and difficulties regarding the 'neutral' status of these entities themselves (see above, Chapter II, Section I, iv). As will be made clear in due course, both of these considerations, viz., that the ultimate portions of reality are per se neither mental or physical, but are such in virtue of their relations, are central to James' neutral monism.

Further, regarding the distinction between intimate and non-intimate relations (versus internal and external relations), some relations must be intimate and others not in order that the distinction (as one of relations) between entities which are mental, on the one hand, and, on the other, those which are physical, be drawn in the way in which James does so. Those relations between entities in virtue of which they compose a stream of thought—rather than some portion of the physical world—must be intimate and in such degree as to be continuous, for it is, at least in part, in virtue of this character of those relations that the entities they relate are mental (see below, Chapter III, Section III).

The preceding discussion of this section prompts several possible objections. Only one of these will be stated and only briefly discussed. One might suppose that
since, according to James' view, an entity is mental in virtue of being situated in relations of such kind that it is a constituent of a stream of thought (roughly, external and continuous relations) and since these relations are 'within' the stream of thought itself, James vitiates his neutral monism by admitting something which is per se mental, viz., these relations. One result of the preceding discussion is the making of a logical distinction (roughly, that between external relations and their terms) between relations and their relata as they occur within the stream of thought. Thus the above objection is founded on a category mistake. Each pulse or portion composing a stream of thought is mental and in virtue of its relations. But it is mistaken and misleading to assert that these relations (as opposed to their terms) are mental. These relations might be described, for example, as 'mental-making' relations, but not as 'mental.' Further and for the same reason, these relations are not to be described as 'neutral.' The relata of these relations are as such, i.e., considered apart from the relations, 'neutral,' and as terms of the relations, 'mental.' Neither of these adjectives, however, have been defined in such a way as to correctly apply to relations of any kind.

Section III
A further feature of James' neutral monism is that he denies that there is some quality, or several qualities, common and unique to all mental entities, and/or some (other) quality, or several qualities, common and unique to all physical entities. Thus he states that:

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. . . .60

Descartes' conception of the distinction between the mental and material will serve to illustrate what is here being denied:

For I think that stone is a substance, or a thing which is capable of existing by itself, and that I myself am also a substance, even though I understand perfectly that I am a being that thinks and that is not extended, and that stone, on the contrary, is an extended being which does not think.61

From the very fact that I know with certainty that I exist, and that I find that absolutely nothing else belongs, necessarily, to my nature or essence except that I am a thinking being, I readily conclude that my essence consists solely in being a body which thinks of a substance whose whole essence or nature is only to think. And although perhaps, or rather certainly, I have a body with which I am very closely united, nevertheless, since on the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of myself in so far as I am only a thinking and not an extended being, and since on the other hand I have a distinct idea of body in so far as it is only an extended being which does not think, it is certain that that "I"--that is to say, my soul, by virtue of which I am what I am--is entirely

60 Ibid., p. 3.
"Thought" is conceived by Descartes as common and unique to minds, being their 'nature or essence;' "extension," on the other hand, is common and unique to physical things. (In order to better serve its present purpose of exemplifying the view James discards, other aspects of Descartes' conception of mind and matter are disregarded— that they differ also as to their substance, that they perhaps differ, respectively, as an activity and an attribute, and so forth.)

The consideration of a few propositions will assist in clarifying James' view. The meaning of 'There is an apple in the bowl' could be conveyed to most persons by some such statement as 'There is something in the bowl which is red and glossy on the outside and white on the inside, spherical, smooth, firm, about the size of a tennis ball, and sweet and tart in taste.' That is to say, an apple, as well as almost any other physical object, can be described in a fairly distinctive way by simply indicating some or all of its intrinsic qualities. 'There is a physical object in the room,' on the other hand, does not have a rough equivalent similar in type to that for the first example; there is no set of predicates for which 'a physical object' can be substituted. Once the physical object

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62Ibid., p. 190.
is identified, i.e., as to whether it is an apple, a chair, or a table, predicates can be applied, but not beforehand. The same is true of 'I have a mental image in mind,' i.e., 'a mental image' cannot be replaced by suitable predicates. Only after the mental image is identified as being of something particular can a description in terms of intrinsic properties be given. And further, this description is not such as to be that of a mental image rather than that of a physical object, i.e., the same kinds of predicates must be utilized in characterizing both the specified mental image and physical object. Thus in describing either an apple or the mental image of an apple such predicates as 'red,' 'round,' and 'glossy' would be applicable. Accordingly, James maintains that:

Descartes for the first time defined thought as the absolutely unextended, and later philosophers have accepted the description as correct. But what possible meaning has it to say that, when we think of a foot-rule or a square yard, extension is not attributable to our thought? Of every extended object the adequate mental picture must have all the extension of the object itself.⁶³

Why, for example, do we call a fire hot, and water wet, and yet refuse to say that our mental state, when it is "of" these objects, is either wet or hot? 'Intentionally,' at any rate, and when the mental state is a vivid image, hotness and wetness are in it just as much as they are in the physical experience.⁶⁴

The remainder of the two sentences, i.e., 'There

⁶³James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 30.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 31-32.
is . . . in the room,' and 'I have . . . in mind,' do of course indicate that in the first instance the description applies to a physical object, and in the second, to a mental image. That is to say, to have something in mind is to entertain an idea or image and to be located in the room is to be a physical object. What this suggests is that one must go, so to speak, beyond or outside the entity in question in order to identify it as either physical or mental, that corresponding to the two expression, 'There is . . . in the room,' and 'I have . . . in mind,' are two different contexts or environments, as it were. That is, the given entity is either physical or mental in nature because of its relationships to other entities (these being, respectively, the other occupants of the room and a particular person's other thoughts). James states such a view in such passages as the following:

Just so, I maintain, does a given undivided portion of experience, taken in one context of associates, play the part of a knower, of a state of mind, of 'consciousness;' while in a different context the same undivided bit of experience plays the part of a thing known, of an objective 'content.' In a word, in one group it figures as a thought, in another group as a thing.\textsuperscript{65}

I have tried to show that when we call an experience 'conscious,' that does not mean that it is suffused throughout with a peculiar modality of being ('psychic' being) as stained glass may be suffused with light, but rather that it stands in certain determinate relations to other portions of experience extraneous to itself. These form one peculiar 'con-

\textsuperscript{65}Ibid., pp. 9-10.
In order to support the view that mental and physical entities are not of qualitatively different stuffs, James must defend three claims. First, that a distinction can be drawn between an entity's qualities and its relations. Second, that with regard to their qualities, mental and physical entities do not differ. Third, that wherein they do differ, it is due to a difference of relations (into which they enter as terms).

It has already been shown that James claims that the distinction between the mental and physical is a matter of relations, and that these relations, i.e., the relations in virtue of which an entity is mental, and those in virtue of which an entity is physical, are external (see above, Section II, iv, of this chapter). The distinction between a quality and an external relation is that an entity is in no way modified by acquiring, i.e., becoming a term in, an external relation, whereas an entity is modified in acquiring a quality. Thus a differentiation can be made between qualities and those relations which account for the dissimilarities between things mental and physical.

Ibid., p. 123.
A consideration of some specific quality and external relation will exhibit the plausibility of the second and third of the above claims and James' approach to defending them (that is to say, the following arguments are not offered by James, or in quite the manner they are here). James asserts that extension is not unique to the physical world, that at least some mental entities have extension. He asserts regarding the distinction between the mental and physical that:

The difference between objective and subjective extension is one of relation of a context solely. In the mind the various extents maintain no necessarily stubborn order relatively to each other, while in the physical world they bound each other stably, and, added together, make the great enveloping Unit which we believe in and call real Space. As 'outer,' they carry themselves adversely, so to speak, to one another, exclude one another and maintain their distances; while, as 'inner,' their order is loose, and they form a durcheinander in which unity is lost. But to argue from this that inner experience is absolutely inextensive seems to me little short of absurd. The two worlds differ, not by the presence or absence of extension, but by the relations of the extensions which in both worlds exist. Since, according to James, extension is possessed by both physical entities and some mental entities (e.g., visual mental images), it must be a quality rather than a relation. Thus an entity having extension is physical rather than mental only if it is related in a certain manner to other entities. The relation here would seem to be something like that of spatial situation or place.

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It has become a truism in philosophical literature that certain mental phenomena are intrinsically indistinguishable from their physical counterparts, i.e., a vivid hallucination or dream image may, by and of itself, exactly resemble a veridical experience. It is thus, rather obviously, the nature of the relations--or lack of them--which non-veridical experiences have to the remainder of our experience which 'gives them away.' A relation (or, perhaps, cluster of relations) of some importance in this regard is that here designated as place or location. A suitable example is that of a mirage, since it is both frequent enough to be familiar and of sufficient duration and constancy of appearance to be described. What appears to the motorist to be a pool of water on the road ahead, but is in fact a mirage, usually at first deceives in virtue of its resemblance to a pool of water. There is often nothing about its visual appearance which would allow it to be distinguished from a pool of water. But the illusion is usually soon discovered (and this would occur even if it not only looked like water, but also could be made to give the other sensations to the skin and palate which water produces). How is the illusion detected? As the motorist drives down the road the mirage begins to behave in a peculiar way. What generally takes place is difficult to describe but it perhaps is best done somewhat as follows. The motorist travels the distance
which at first seemed to be the interval between himself and the pool of water. But the pool does not now appear to be there, but still further ahead on the road. Again, the distance which would seem to separate the motorist from the pool is traversed, but again the pool appears to be somewhere else, and so forth. What is especially peculiar about this 'pool of water' is that it soon becomes evident that it cannot be located. No answer is forthcoming to the question: where is it? In short, it is because this entity has no location (among other reasons perhaps) that one refuses to count it as part of physical reality.

iii

Philosophers have tended to assimilate the concepts of extension and location. Descartes asserts, for example, that:

Thus extension in length, breadth and depth constitutes the nature of corporeal substance. . . . For all else that may be attributed to body presupposes extension, and is but a mode of this extended thing. . . . Thus, for example, we cannot conceive figure but as an extended thing, nor movement but as in an extended space. . . .

James, on the other hand, discerns an important difference between them. Roughly, the distinction is that extension is a quality and is possessed by both mental and physical entities; whereas, location is a relation

68 Descartes, Philosophical Essays, p. 240.
and is peculiar to physical entities. For example, 'is round' can be used to complete both 'An apple . . .' and 'A mental image of an apple. . . .' Both the object and the image have extension and their extension can be characterized by means of the predicate. On the contrary, 'an apple' can be the complement of "There is . . . in the bowl," but 'a mental image of an apple' cannot, i.e., 'There is a mental image of an apple in the bowl,' fails to make sense. It is to be noted that the latter statement is nonsensical rather than false. That is to say, the error in supposing that there might be a mental image of an apple in a bowl is not that mental entities are never located in the physical world but rather that they have no location whatsoever. In the words of one of Hume's maxims, "an object may exist and yet be nowhere."69

'There is an apple in my mind' and 'There is a mental image of an apple in my mind' are both nonsensical, and for the reason that the mind is in no proper sense a locus. If mental images but not apples or other physical objects could be located in the mind, it would be quite unaccountable that 'I have an apple in mind' and 'I have a mental image of an apple in mind' can be appropriately used to make the same assertion. The two statements are synonymous because the use of 'in mind' in both is metaphorical. 

'There is a physical object in the bowl,' is thus in a sense analytic. To attribute a place to the entity is to imply that it is physical in nature, and conversely. James asserts that:

In both existential and attributive judgments a synthesis is represented. The syllable ex in the word Existence, da in word Dasein, express it. 'The candle exists' is equivalent to 'The candle is over there.' And the 'over there' means real space, space related to other reals. The proposition amounts to saying: 'The candle is in the same space with other reals.' It affirms of the candle a very concrete predicate--namely, this relation to other particular concrete things.\footnote{James, \textit{The Principles of Psychology}, II, 290.}

It has thus far been maintained that an entity's being extended is not a sufficient condition for its having a location, i.e., some mental entities are extended, but as mental, they have no location. It can also be maintained that an entity's being extended is not a necessary condition for its having a location. In fact, to the extent that an entity's location can be precisely determined, it is without extension. Thus in mathematics, where the need for precision is pre-eminent, location is designated by extensionless points. In determining the location of an object one disregards--abstracts from, so to speak--the object's extension, i.e., its location is not small or great, but more or less exact. The extension of the object (i.e., its size) on the other hand, always admits of an exact determination.
Considering the problem as to whether or not matter is infinitely divisible in the light of the distinction between extension and location set forth here will in turn illuminate the distinction. Regarded as extended a material object is complex, i.e., parts can be distinguished and even separated. Regarded as having position or location a material object is simple, i.e., it is viewed as being without parts. That is to say, for the purpose of locating an object one considers it as a unit, but with the purpose of discerning or dissociating its parts in mind one considers it as extended. Thus any physical object is infinitely divisible from one viewpoint and simple from another. Consequently, Descartes conceives extension to be the essence of matter and concludes that matter is infinitely divisible. Leibnitz, on the other hand, recognizes the existence of simple entities and reduces extension to location:

Now simple substance, although it does not in itself have extension, nevertheless has position, which is the ground of extension, since extension is the continuous simultaneous repetition of position—as we say a line is made by the fluxion of a point. . . .

It does not vitiate the above arguments to point out

that James apparently does in one sense conceive place in a way different from that described above. James says, for example, of "a sensation from the candle-flame . . . or . . . diaper-pin" of "a child newly born" that: "The flame fills its own place, the pain fills its own place."\(^7\)

But the notion of place or location which governs our adult thought and behavior, as James clearly recognizes, is something quite different from the sensations of an infant. Though this more sophisticated notion of location is the result of a construction, the spatial order or continuum which results is still, in some sense, that of the physical world (as will be argued in Section II of Chapter II, we reconstruct 'the physical world' as it is given in many ways). That this spatial order is that of the physical world rather than a structure of or in the mind, James makes clear. He asserts, for example:

> There is no duplicate space known aliunde, or created by an 'epoch-making achievement' into which our sensations, originally spaceless, are dropped. They bring space and all its places to our intellect, and do not derive it thence.\(^7\)

Accordingly, James rejects any Kantian view of space:

> I call this view mythological, because I am conscious of no such Kantian machinestop in my mind, and feel no call to disparage the powers of poor sensation in this merciless way. I have no introspective experience of mentally producing or creating space. . . .

\(^7\)James, *The Principles of Psychology*, II, 34-35.

\(^7\) *Ibid.*, p. 35.
That the higher parts of the mind come in, who can deny? They add and subtract, they compare and measure, they reproduce and abstract. They inweave the space-sensations with intellectual relations; but these relations are the same when they obtain between the elements of the space-system as when they obtain between any of the other elements of which the world is made.74

Much as physical causation becomes for us a means to bringing about desired effects (see below, Chapters III and IV), distance, direction, and so forth, become ways of reaching desired destinations. A reconstruction is involved and one which is guided by considerations of utility, but it nonetheless depends upon certain relations being given from the start.

Thus James indicates that one of the factors involved in this reconstruction is the fact that sensory routes can usually be retraced in our experience:

We can usually recover anything lost from sight by moving our attention and our eyes back in its direction; and through these constant changes every field of seen things comes at last to be thought of as always having a fringe of other things possible to be seen spreading in all directions round about it.75

At least part of what is implied in granting an entity location is that one can, as it were, find one's way back to some sensation, through certain others. This is not the case with hallucinations (at least if, one is not drugged or psychotic). One turns one's head in the same

74Ibid., p. 275.

75Ibid., pp. 185-86.
direction again, returns one's gaze to where the hallucina-
tion appeared, but it has now vanished (or it reappears
elsewhere perhaps). It is because mirages, hallucinations,
and so forth, do not exhibit a certain sort of stability
such that they can be located that they do not belong to
the spatial order, and therefore do not belong to the
physical world.

The foregoing discussion of extension as a quality
and location as a relation will receive some confirmation
and clarification in what follows. The causal character
of experience will be subjected to much the same kind of
analysis as is its spatial character (extension and loca-
tion) above (see below, Section II of Chapter III, where
it is argued in effect that the sensible qualities which
occur in causal nexes are, as such, neither mental nor
physical in nature, but as physical, are such, in virtue
of entering into various 'energetic' relations). Also,
the nature of relations occurring in experience 'as given'
will be discussed (see above, Sections II and III of Chap-
ter II), where it will be argued that a distinction can be
drawn between particular, perceptual relations (e.g.,
perceived relations of location, such as is expressed by
'the book is on the table') and conceptual relations (e.g.,
such as those by means of which a spatial continuum is con-
structed). Thus the discussion of this section is yet
incomplete and oversimplified. It might best be under-
stood as offering an *a fortiori* argument: if the distinction between qualities and relations necessary to James' neutral monism can be made out with respect to extention and location, it is all the more plausible that the same holds regarding notions less intimately related.

Section IV

James not only denies that mind and matter are qualitatively different stuffs but also that they are numerically different. Thus James disclaims any theory according to which the mental world is, as it were, the identical twin of the physical world—resembling the physical world in all respects but nonetheless another order of reality. (It of course also follows that the mind does not resemble the physical world in only some respects.) Berkeley also rejects the theory that the mind is a facsimile of a material world; he states such a theory in the following way:

But, say you, though the ideas themselves do not exist without the mind, yet there may be things like them, whereof they are copies or resemblances, which things exist without the mind in an unthinking substance.  

James denies that the stuff of mind and matter is

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If the reader will take his own experiences, he will see what I mean. Let him begin with a perceptual experience, the 'presentation,' so called, of a physical object, his actual field of vision, the room he sits in, with the book he is reading as its centre; and let him for the present treat this complex object in the common-sense way as being 'really' what it seems to be, namely, a collection of physical things cut out from an environing world of other physical things with which these physical things have actual or potential relations. Now at the same time it is just those self-same things which his mind, as we say, perceives. . . .

An important implication of the view that the stuff of mind and matter is numerically identical is a presentative theory of perception. The passage from which the immediately above quotation is drawn continues as follows:

. . . and the whole philosophy of perception from Democritus's time downwards has been just one long wrangle over the paradox that what is evidently one reality should be in two places at once, both in outer space and in a person's mind. 'Representative' theories of perception avoid the logical paradox, but on the other hand they violate the reader's sense of life, which knows no intervening mental image but seems to see the room and the book immediately just as they physically exist.

The puzzle of how the one identical room can be in two places is at bottom just the puzzle of how one identical point can be on two lines. It can, if it be situated at their intersection; and similarly, if the 'pure experience' of the room were a place

77 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 11.

78 'Perception' is used here synonymously with 'sensory acquaintance'; 'perception' is used below in a different sense (see Chapter II, Section I, ix).
of intersection of two processes, which connected it with different groups of associates respectively, it could be counted twice over as belonging to either group, and spoken of loosely as existing in two places, although it would remain all the time a numerically single thing.79

In the light of James' view that only physical entities can have place or location (see above, Section III, ii, and following of this chapter), his comparison of pure experience with the point lying on two intersecting lines must be regarded as nothing more than an analogy. The problem is not that of explaining how "one reality should be in two places at once, both in outer space and in a person's mind" but that of showing how one reality can be both mental and physical, that is, among other things, how one reality can both be in a place and have no place. James' analogy obscures his thesis that the self-same entity can be both mental and physical by being a term in two different kinds of relations, for the relations between the point of intersection of two lines and other points on the two lines are of the same kind, viz., that of spatial situation. The analogy suggests that pure experience is comparable to a house located at the intersection of two streets, and that pure experience can be regarded as both mental and physical in much the same way as such a house will have two addresses, it being possible to designate its location by reference to either of two

79James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, pp. 11-12.
streets. However, a less misleading comparison might be that between the physical and a house being at the corner of First Street and First Avenue, and that between the mental and the same house being the home of Mr. Jones. To designate the house in the former way is to locate it, designating it in the latter way does not assign it a location, i.e., in referring to the house as the home of Mr. Jones one identifies it by one of its relations to a particular person, to his interests, activities, and so forth.

iii

James' presentative view of sense-perception may give rise to the following objection. If as James maintains, the perception of an object and the object thereby perceived, i.e., the mental and physical components of perception, are numerically identical, there seems to be no way of accounting for non-veridical perceptions, for in the case of non-veridical perception it would appear that we encounter perception but no object perceived, i.e., the situation is one in which there is no physical component.

However, pure experience as such is neither veridical nor non-veridical experience, for it is neither mental nor physical since it is the stuff of which both sorts of entities are composed. A perception either is or is not
veridical depending upon whether or not it is related in certain ways to the physical world. In other words, what is designated by such a phrase as 'the perception of the object—the object perceived' is a single fact, i.e., this complex phrase designates a simple entity. On the other hand, corresponding to either component of the phrase is a complex of entities. 'The perception of the object—the object perceived,' denoted a fact considered in abstraction from both the mind which cognizes it and the physical world. 'The perception of the object' sets this fact in relation to the cognizing mind, 'the object perceived,' sets it in relation to an environing physical world. James states this view in the following way:

Experience, I believe, has no such inner duplicity; and the separation of it into consciousness and content comes, not by way of subtraction, but by way of addition—the addition, to a given concrete piece of it, of other sets of experiences, in connection with which severally its use or function may be of two different kinds.

It can thus be said that James' theory of perception differs from a representative theory in several respects. Stated in general terms, a representative theory proposes that in the case of veridical perception a two-fold relation obtains between the perception and some aspect of the physical world; the former is related to the latter somewhat as a copy is to the original; the one

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80 Ibid., p. 9.
is related to the other by similarity. The first of the relations constitutes the basic difference between the mental and the physical; the second relation accounts for the difference between veridical and non-veridical perception. That is to say, mind is primarily that in or upon which the physical world produces or impresses a replica of itself, and when the replica closely resembles the character of the physical world the result is veridical perception. According to James' theory, the relation in virtue of which a perception is veridical does not obtain between the perception and its object, but between its object and other constituents of the physical world, and this same relation accounts both for the veridical nature of the perception and the physical nature of its object. Further, this relation is not that of a copy to the original, but some such relation as that of spatial location. Thus an important consequence of James' view is the denial of the classical empiricist distinction between mind and the physical world and the causal theory of perception.

The relation between a veridical perception and its object, on the other hand, is that of numerical identity. It does of course follow that a veridical perception and its object are related as similar (since they are identical) but (as stated above) it is not this relation in virtue of which it is veridical. The perception and its object are identical, i.e., the perception is itself a
part of the physical world, in virtue of being related in
certain ways to other constituents of the physical world,
and in being so related to them the perception is veridi-
cal. Two points discussed above must be kept in mind.
First, a veridical perception is not only a part of the
physical world but a mental reality as well. Second, it
is due to the nature of the relations themselves that a
veridical perception is related to other physical entities
and is thus a part of the physical world, i.e., is itself
a physical entity. Recurring to James' analogy of the
two intersection lines, somewhat as the point of inter-
section is a point on both of the lines, a veridical per-
ception is a constituent of both the physical world and
a mind, and a veridical perception is a constituent of both
because it enters into two different kinds of relations,
in somewhat the same way as the point of intersection is
joined by line segments with other points on each of the
two lines.

iv

A second possible objection to James' view of the
nature of sense-perception is the following. It seems
that James has made the objects of the physical world
experiencable--by making them the very same objects as
those of consciousness, yet set in different relations--
but at the expense of excluding the relations among ob-
jects in the physical world from experience. It would thus appear that James' theory of perception is inconsistent with his radical empiricism.

But consider the following passage:

... if our own private vision of the paper be considered in abstraction from every other event, as if it constituted by itself the universe (and it might perfectly well do so, for aught we can understand to the contrary), then the paper seen and the seeing of it are only two names for one indivisible fact which, properly named, is the datum, the phenomenon, or the experience. The paper is in the mind and the mind is around the paper, because paper and mind are only two names that are given later to the one experience, when, taken in a larger world of which it forms a part, its connections are traced in different directions. To know immediately, then, or intuitively, is for mental content and object to be identical.81

In explaining what it is to know something "immediately or intuitively" James need not have illustrated his meaning with the printed pages before his readers' eyes, which is an object of sorts, but might also have considered some relation between object, e.g., the spatial relationship between the page and the table on which the book might rest. What is essential is that the entity (object or relation) be considered in abstraction from everything else. If one considers a book lying on a table, separating it in thought from the table on which it is placed, from the friend from whom it was borrowed, from one's interest concerning its contents and so forth, one in effect considers

it in abstraction from every other thing. One would then presumably attend to its inherent properties, be it brief or lengthy, with a brown of blue cover, and so forth. On the other hand, if one chooses to consider only the book's spatial relation to the table top, one would separate it in thought not only from other relations into which it may enter, but would also omit from view all of the properties of the book and table other than certain spatial (relational) ones, i.e., one would consider the book and table only in so far as they are terms of a certain spatial relation. In some such sense as this one can conceive of a relation in abstraction from the rest of the universe. Consequently, the relations between physical entities (as well as the physical entities they relate) can be known "immediately or intuitively" and what is present in such an instance of knowing is a single datum, belonging both to a physical world (e.g., the book-table relation being in turn related to a chair, lamp, and the other things in its physical surroundings) and a mind (e.g., that of the present reader of the book). That James maintains that relations between physical objects comprise part of the immediate data of sense-experience is corroborated by such passages as the following:

The unit of composition of our perception of time is a duration. . . . It is only as parts of this duration-block that the relation of succession of one end to the other is perceived. . . . When we come
to study the perception of Space, we shall find it quite analogous to time in this regard. Date in time corresponds to position in space . . . the original experience of both space and time is always of something already given as a unity, inside of which attention afterward discriminates parts in relation to each other. 82

V

A third possible objection to James' theory of perception is that it grants to non-veridical sense-perceptions a status in the 'real world.' According to James, veridical perceptions are part of the physical world and differ from those which are non-veridical only in virtue of having certain external relations which non-veridical perceptions fail to have. Thus it would seem that non-veridical perceptions are a part of the world, though not of the physical world. That they have some sort of ontological status James affirms in the following passage:

Habitually and practically we do not count these disregarded things as existents at all. For them Voe victis is the law in the popular philosophy; they are not even treated as appearances; they are treated as if they were mere waste, equivalent to nothing at all. To the genuinely philosophic mind, however, they still have existence, though not the same existence, as the real things. As objects of fance, as errors, as occupants of dreamland, etc., they are in their way as indefeasible parts of life, as undeniable features of the Universe, as the realities are in their way. The total world of which the philosophers must take account is thus composed of the realities plus the fancies and illusions. 83

82 James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 609-610.
83 Ibid., II, 291.
However, it is to be recalled that according to James relations are real, i.e., the entities which enter into relations and the relations are co-ordinate aspects of reality. Thus James maintains in effect that any realm of reality comprises both entities and relations among them—the entities and their relations are to it as two legs are to walking, so to speak. Hence, since non-veridical perceptions are those which lack relations to entities external to the mind of the percipient, they are a part of no 'real world' other than that of the subjective life of the percipient. In other words, non-veridical perceptions are real but not a part of some world, be it a physical world or one separate from both the physical world and some mind, since they are terms only in mental relations.

It should be noted that James' theory of perception has three major metaphysical presuppositions. The first is that there are external relations and that perceptions enter as terms into such relations. Thus a veridical-perception is both mental and physical (i.e., the perceiving of the object and the object perceived are numerically identical) because it enters as a term into two different kinds of external relations.

Secondly, every portion of reality has an environ-
ment, i.e., something more, or something other, to which it stands in relation. James thus asserts that:

"... the pluralistic view which I prefer to adopt is willing to believe that there may ultimately never be an all-form at all, that the substance of reality may never get totally collected, that some of it may remain outside of the largest combination of it ever made, and that a distributive form of reality, the each-form, is, logically as acceptable and empirically as probable as the all-form commonly acquiesced in as so obviously the self-evident thing."

Cognition— including perception— also has its environment, for James maintains that:

"Since the acquisition of conscious quality on the part of an experience depends upon a context coming to it, it follows that the sum total of all experiences, having no context, can not strictly be called conscious at all."

"... the greatest knower of them all may yet not know the whole of everything, or even know what he does know at one single stroke. ...

Since he maintains that no single experience encompasses the whole of physical reality James can also maintain that a veridical perception is physical—and mental—and related to a physical—but non-mental—environment.

In other words, to assert that a veridical perception is itself a physical entity is in effect to assert that in knowing that entity there is yet more to know. An entity as experienced, is both mental and physical, as experience—

84 James, *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 34.
85 James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, p. 134.
86 James, *Pragmatism*, p. 100.
able (but not yet experienced), it is physical only.

James claims that "a philosophy of pure experience ... harmonizes best with a radical pluralism."\(^\text{87}\)

The preceding discussion indicates that James' neutral monism is consistent with some form of metaphysical pluralism. The two views thus far discussed as metaphysical presuppositions of James' theory of perception are essentially pluralistic views, viz., no single collection of entities includes the totality of what is, and each of the entities within at least some of these collections retains its identity. Hence, James' neutral monism is to be distinguished from what he terms 'absolute monism' and delineates as follows:

Pluralism on the other hand has no need of this dogmatic rigoristic temper. Provided you grant some separation among things, some tremor of independence, some free play of parts on one another, some real novelty or chance, however minute, she is amply satisfied, and will allow you any amount, however great, of real union. How much of union there may be is a question that she thinks can only be decided empirically. The amount may be enormous, colossal; but absolute monism is shattered if, along with all the union, there has to be granted the slightest modicum, the most incipient nascency, or the most residual trace, of a separation that is not 'over-come.'\(^\text{88}\)

The third presupposition of James' theory of perception is the notion of pure experience. The perceptions

\(^{87}\text{James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 90.}\)

\(^{88}\text{James, Pragmatism, pp. 107-08.}\)
themselves, apart from their external relations and environment, are neither mental nor physical in nature. Thus corresponding to the three elements involved in veridical perception, the perception, the physical world, and relations between them are three basic metaphysical notions— that of pure experience, that of an environment as present to every reality, and that of external relations. It is to an explication of the nature of pure experience that the discussion now turns.
CHAPTER II

This chapter is devoted to explicating what is the most fundamental and also the most difficult element of James' neutral monism, viz., his notion of pure experience. In what is to follow two alternative interpretations of the notion will be given. An endeavor will be made to determine to what extent each is coherent with other of James' views and if they are mutually compatible. These interpretations of the notion of 'pure experience,' stated briefly and as claims to be discussed in turn are: that pure experience is that which, when cognized as such, is cognized "immediately or intuitively"¹ and that pure experience is the "given order" of experience.²

Section I

What would seem the most ruinous objection to the notion of pure experience is propounded and answered by James himself in the following passage:

First, of all, this will be asked: "If experience has not 'conscious' existence, if it be not partly made of 'consciousness,' of what then is it made?

¹James, Essays on Faith and Morals, p. 118.
²James, The Meaning of Truth, p. 50.
Matter we know, and thought we know, and conscious content we know, but neutral and simple 'pure experience' is something we know not at all. Say what it consists of—for it must consist of something—or be willing to give it up!"

To this challenge the reply is easy. Although for fluency's sake I myself spoke early in this article of a stuff of pure experience, I have now to say that there is no general stuff of which experience at large is made. There are as many stuffs as there are 'natures' in the things experienced. If you ask what any one bit of pure experience is made of, the answer is always the same: "It is made of that, of just what appears, of space, of intensity, of flatness, brownness, heaviness, or what not." Shadworth Hodgson's analysis here leaves nothing to be desired. Experience is only a collective name for all these sensible natures, and save for time and space (and, if you like, for 'being') there appears no universal element of which all things are made.3

Thus it appears that James does not conceive pure experience as being a mysterious stuff, itself dissimilar to familiar physical things and conscious states yet somehow 'manifesting' itself in these forms. Were he to do so his conception of pure experience would surely be subject to one of his criticisms of absolute idealism, viz., that it is an inconsistent view, being both monistic and dualistic in nature. According to James, absolute idealism maintains that everything is constitutive of the Absolute, and as such, everything is 'one.' However, a dichotomy between appearance and reality must be drawn in so far as things have aspects not attributable to the Absolute, i.e., they appear to be 'many' rather than 'one,' temporal

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rather than timeless, and so forth.

Things true of the world in its finite aspects, then, are not true of it in its infinite capacity. Qua finite and plural its accounts of itself to itself are different from what its account to itself qua infinite must be.4

Thus absolute idealism attempts to maintain a monistic view by also committing itself to one that is essentially dualistic:

But what is the use of a thing's being only once if it can be taken twice over, and if being taken in different ways makes different things true of it.5

Analogously, if James were to distinguish pure experience from the ordinary aspects of physical things and conscious states in such a way as to acknowledge different types of metaphysical stuff, viz., physical and mental stuff, and pure experience, his neutral monism would be rendered inconsistent.

Neither it seems, is James proposing that there is a single generic stuff, a "general stuff of which everything at large is made." To deny that, "Experience is only a collective name for all these sensible natures, and save for time and space (and, if you like, for 'being') there appears no universal element of which all things are made," would be inconsistent with his commitment to an empiricist view; for he asserts:

4James, A Pluralistic Universe, pp. 39-40.
5Ibid., pp. 38-39.
Empiricism is known as the opposite of rationalism. Rationalism tends to emphasize universals and to make wholes prior to parts in order of logic as well as in that of being. Empiricism, on the contrary, lays the explanatory stress upon the part, the element, the individual and treats the whole as a collection and the universal as an abstraction. My description of things, accordingly, starts with the parts and makes of the whole a being of the second order.®

Yet it would seem that James defeats the above objection only to have to do battle with another. One might argue that if 'pure experience' designates neither a stuff distinct in nature from that of minds and physical things nor "a general stuff" of which both minds and physical things are composed, then the notion of 'pure experience' is meaningless according to "the pragmatic rule." For James asserts that:

The pragmatic rule is that the meaning of a concept may always be found, if not in some sensible particular which it directly designates, then in some particular difference in the course of human experience which its being true will make. Test every concept by the question 'What sensible difference to anybody will its truth make?' and you are in the best possible position for understanding what it means and for discussing its importance. If, questioning whether a certain concept be true of false, you can think of absolutely nothing that would practically differ in the two cases, you may assume that the alternative is meaningless and that your concept is no distinct idea. If two concepts lead you to infer the same particular consequence, then you may assume that they embody the same meaning under different names.®

®James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, pp. 41-42.

®James, Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 60.
Thus one might contend that in considering the thesis that pure experience is the "one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed" no "sensible difference" can be described which the thesis would in some way imply. That is to say, with or without the notion of pure experience, one's view of reality is the same: "It is made of that, of just what appears, of space, of intensity, of flatness, brownness, heaviness, or what not."

The above objections to James' notion of 'pure experience' make the challenge that for the notion to be both meaningful and consistent it must be distinguishable from that of both the physical and the mental, yet not in such a way as to designate a stuff different in kind from that of physical and mental entities. It has been maintained that the distinction between the mental and the physical is to be explained in terms of a difference between the kinds of relations that obtain among entities rather than a difference with regard to the stuff composing them. Thus pure experience corresponds to the terms of such relations in roughly the same fashion as do the mental and physical to the two respective kinds of relations.

\[^8\] James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 4.
\[^9\] Ibid., p. 27.
Consequently, there is no "sensible difference" as between mental and physical entities as such in that they are constituted of the same stuff, i.e., the stuffs of both kinds of entities are qualitatively identical (see above, Chapter I, Section III). However, because mental entities differ from physical entities with regard to the relations in which they are terms and because these relations are items of experience, a "sensible difference" of some sort can be described in terms of which they can be distinguished.

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By means of such an argument as this perhaps James' notion of 'pure experience' gains safe passage through the symplegades. However, the cogency of the argument is contingent upon a further explication of the notion of 'pure experience.' For this purpose a distinction is to be drawn between 'knowing immediately or intuitively' and 'sense-experience.' This distinction, stated briefly in anticipation of its explication, is that: knowing immediately or intuitively is a cognizing of pure experience as such, whereas, sense-experience is a cognition which also includes relations in which portions of pure experience occur.

In terms of this distinction, the claim which will be argued is that: sense-experience is not only of some
sensible fact, but is also of that fact's relations both to the percipient and an environing physical world, i.e., sense-experience may be analyzed as consisting of pure experience, its relations to a mind, and its relations to physical reality. It can thus be shown that pure experience and the two kinds of relations, by being terms in which portions of pure experience are either mental or physical entities, are all elements of some sort of experience. Immediate or intuitive cognition is of pure experience as such; sense-experience is of pure experience and its relations to other things, notably, those of its relations in virtue of which it is both physical object and mental. Thus James' notion of 'pure experience' can be shown to be empirically, i.e., experientially, distinguishable from that of both the physical and the mental, yet not in such a way as to designate a stuff different in kind from that of physical and mental entities.

iv

James claims that: "To know immediately, then, or intuitively, is for mental content and object to be identical." Is to know in this way thus to cognize pure experience? The passage from which the quotation immediately above is drawn states that a sufficient condition for immediate or intuitive cognition is that its object "be

10James, The Meaning of Truth, pp. 49-50.
considered in abstraction from every other event, as if it constituted by itself the universe." The passage is as follows:

But if our own private vision of the paper be considered in abstraction from every other event, as if it constituted by itself the universe (and it might perfectly well do so, for aught we can understand to the contrary), then the paper seen and the seeing of it are only two names for one indivisible fact which, properly named, is the datum, the phenomenon, or the experience. The paper is in the mind and the mind is around the paper, because paper and mind are only two names that are given later to the one experience, when, taken in a larger world of which it forms a part, its connections are traced in different directions. To know immediately, then, or intuitively, is for mental content and object to be identical.11

To cognize an entity in this way is to cognize it exclusively of all its relations to other things, which in turn implies cognizing it exclusively of those relations in virtue of which it is mental or physical. Thus knowing immediately or intuitively is tantamount to cognizing an entity as pure experience.

This conclusion, however, calls for some clarification. Since 'pure experience' designates a stuff of which everything is composed, to cognize reality in any form is to cognize pure experience. Accordingly, immediate or intuitive cognition is not a privileged type of cognition, giving access to a special region of reality to be revealed in no other way. In other words, James is

11Ibid., pp. 48-50.
not simply indulging a desire to include some sort of mysticism within the general framework of an empiricist epistemology. It is on this point that James and Bergson, for example, part company.\textsuperscript{12} Pure experience is not some special time-stuff, rather "it is made of that, of just what appears, of space, of intensity, of flatness, brownness, heaviness, or what not."\textsuperscript{13} Regarding any such 'intuition' of time as such James states that:

\ldots we can no more intuit a duration than we can intuit an extension, devoid of all sensible content.\textsuperscript{14}

Every type of cognition apprehends pure experience in so far as it is an apprehension of reality; immediate or intuitive cognition apprehends an entity as pure experience in that it is an apprehension of that entity as apart from both mental and physical reality, "as if it constituted by itself the universe."

Since in knowing immediately or intuitively what is known and the knowing of it constitute a single 'fact,' it is perhaps misleading to assert that pure experience is simply what is thereby apprehended. The 'fact' known is also the fact of its being known, they being numerically the same fact. Therefore:

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\item[\textsuperscript{12}] For comments on Bergson's mysticism, see, for example, C. I. Lewis, Mind and the World Order (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1956), p. 40 ff.
\item[\textsuperscript{13}] James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 27.
\item[\textsuperscript{14}] James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 620.
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What represents and what is prepresented is here numerically the same; but we must remember that no dualism of being represented and representing resides in the experience per se. In its pure state, or when isolated, there is no self-splitting of it into consciousness and what the consciousness is 'of.'

Yet it is not to be inferred that James here commits himself to some theory of panpsychism. Here is a significant difference between James and Whitehead. Whitehead's 'actual entities' have both a mental and physical 'pole' whereas pure experience is 'neutral' being without either a mental or physical nature. Numerically the same fact, i.e., numerically the same portion of pure experience, is both physical object known and the knowing of it because of its relations both to a larger world not presently known and to the present knower. Pure experience itself, (i.e., as apart from these relations), however, is neither the object known nor the knowing of it, i.e., it is neither physical nor mental. Thus:

The paper is in the mind and the mind is around the paper, because paper and mind are only two names that are given later to the one experience, when, taken in a larger world of which it forms a part,

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15James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 23.

16Compare Robert M. Kunz, A Critical Examination of the Radical Empiricism of William James (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Buffalo, 1953), p. 6 ff., where it is argued that James is committed to a panpsychist theory.

its connections are traced in different directions.\(^\text{18}\)

It is only contingently true that portions of pure experience 'become' mental, physical, or both mental and physical—as in the case of knowing immediately or intuitively—by entering as terms into various relations; and even if it were contingently the case that every portion of pure experience was 'mental' it would be so in virtue of being a term in an external relation and not because of its inherent nature. However, what is cognized immediately or intuitively is as a matter of fact both the possession of a mind and a portion of the physical world. This mode of cognition prescinds from this fact, so to speak; but does not preclude it. That is to say, pure experience is cognized in this way, although the fact that it is cognized is not. (In other words, pure experience and the cognition of it is a single 'fact,' yet an awareness of this cognition itself, and as such is an additional 'fact.' 'Having a headache,' for example, does not consist of a pain and a feeling of pain as separate components; knowing this 'fact' in turn introduces a second component.)

Thus this interpretation of James' notion of 'pure experience' is consistent with what might be termed a common sense view of reality on three points: (1) Not every portion of reality need have the characteristics of Mind.

\(^{18}\)James, *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 49.
The universe has the nature of Mind only in so far as individual portions of it (i.e., pure experience) are so related to others so as to be part of some particular mind. (2) Though pure experience is itself neither mental nor physical in nature, no portion of it is necessarily just that. It can be presumed that every portion of pure experience is always to be found as related to others so that mental and physical entities result. In other words, no entity need be excluded from the universe of minds and physical things. (3) The reality of the mental and physical orders is upheld. It is only in virtue of their relations that entities are mental or physical, i.e., other than just pure experience, but relations are real ("any kind of relation experienced must be as 'real' as anything else in the system").

Since what is known immediately or intuitively is as a matter of fact related in certain ways to a mind—in that it is cognized—and also to a physical world—provided that it is not a hallucination—to know in this manner is not to know reality as it is actually constituted. Correspondingly, this mode of cognition is a perversion, as it were, of our ordinary sense-experience. According to James, one is ordinarily aware in sense-experience, not

19 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 42.
of a solitary fact, but of that fact as part of an experienced whole. In attending to some single sensible fact about an object one is simultaneously aware of other of its features and of their integration as aspects of the object, of at least some of the object's relations to its physical surroundings, and so forth. James states, for example, that:

The 'simple impression' of Hume, the 'simple idea' of Locke are both abstractions, never realized in experience. Experience, from the very first, presents us with concreted objects, vaguely continuous with the rest of the world which envelops them in space and time, and potentially divisible into inward elements and parts.²⁰

This awareness is not simply a visual experience, but includes tactile, auditory, olfactory, visceral, and other such data as well. James states, for example:

Data from all our senses enter into it [the perceptual flux], merged in a general extensiveness of which each occupies a big or little share.²¹

The baby, assailed by eyes, ears, nose, skin and entrails at once, feels it all as one great blooming, buzzing confusion; and to the very end of life, our location of all things in one space is due to the fact that the original extents or bignesses of all the sensations which came to our notice at once, coalesced together into one and the same space.²²

Further, James claims that this awareness not only encompasses the fact perceived as a part of its immediate

²⁰James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 487.
²¹James, Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 49.
²²James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 488.
surroundings but a mental setting as well, an aura of interest and mood, and certain thoughts and feelings, however dim and elusive, which contemplating it arouse. The mood or emotion is also felt as part of a single, undivided experience, and not as a separate cognition. Accordingly, he asserts that it is difficult to discern "in a presented and recognized material object, what part comes in through the sense-organs and what part comes 'out of one's head'" and continues by stating that:

Sensations and apperceptive ideas fuse here so intimately that you can no more tell where one begins and the other ends, than you can tell, in those cunning circular panoramas that have lately been exhibited, where the real foreground and the painted canvas join together.

Thus the following might be considered as a description of sense-experience as conceived above:

There seems to be a single starting point for psychology, exactly as for all the other sciences: the world as we find it, naively and uncritically... In my case, which may be taken as representative of many others, that naive picture consists, at this moment, of a blue lake with dark forests around it, a big, gray rock, hard and cool, which I have chosen as a set, a paper on which I write, a faint noise of the wind which hardly moves the trees, and a strong odor characteristic of boats and fishing. But there is more in this world: somehow I now behold, though it does not become fused with the blue lake of the present, another lake of milder blue, at which I found myself, some years ago, looking from its shore in Illinois. I am accustomed to beholding thousands of views of this kind which arise when I am alone.

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23James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 29.
24Ibid., p. 30.
And there is still more in this world: for instance, my hand and fingers as they lightly move across the paper. Now, when I stop writing and look around again, there also is a feeling of health and vigor. But in the next moment I feel something like a dark pressure somewhere in my interior which tends to develop into a feeling of being hunted—I have promised to have this manuscript ready within a few months.25

This description of sense-experience, however, fails in one sense to convey its nature as conceived above. It is a single experience in which the various elements distinguished in the description are intimately integrated. This feature of sense-experience is perhaps most accurately represented in literature. The following will serve as an example:

There it is before you—smiling, frowning, inviting, grand, mean, insipid, or savage, and always mute with an air of whispering, Come and find out. This one was almost featureless, as if still in the making, with an aspect of monotonous grimness. The edge of a colossal jungle, so dark-green as to be almost black, fringed with white stuff ran straight, like a ruled line, far, far away along a blue sea whose glitter was blurred by a creeping mist. The sun was fierce, the land seemed to glisten and drip with steam. Here and there grayish-whitish specks showed up clustered inside the white surf, with a flag flying above them perhaps. Settlements some centuries old, and still no bigger than pinheads on the untouched expanse of their background.26

Thus, the nature of sense-experience, apprehended in a

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naive or natural way, might be described as follows with regard to its content and form. As regards its content, it consists of (1) aspects of several physical objects and relations between them. Thus what is experienced is not so much a physical object, as a field including several physical objects yet not as distinct and entire. This field of experience includes more than, for example, one's visual field; it consists of (2) content from all of the senses, and bodily sensations as well. Further, it includes (3) an 'inner' or 'subjective' content, a 'frame of mind' in general and the individual thoughts and feelings that accompany or compose it. As regards its structure or form, what is presented is (1) a field of experience, numerous heterogeneous contents integrated as a single experience. Though complex and concrete, (2) part of this field is experienced as its center or focus, the rest as more or less marginal. The focus of the field is that portion of it on which attention converges or is concentrated. Much as the focus of one's visual field at any moment is whatever one is 'looking at,' the focus of one's total field of experience is whatever one is momentarily attending to, i.e., looking at, listening to, and so forth. The focus of some moment's sense-experience is of course something being inspected by sight, hearing, touch, smell or taste—even though subjective feelings are always present.
Sense-experience is thus an experienced whole in which a datum of sense is framed or fringed by other such data as well as non-sensous data.

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Two points in this description of sense-experience seem especially problematical. First of all, it may seem odd if not incongruous to assert that sense-experience has an 'inner' or 'subjective' content. The more persuasive view would seem to be that sense-experiences and concomitant emotions, moods, and so forth are always experienced as part of separate rather than a single field. Locke perhaps set this precedent by distinguishing between "sensation" and "reflection," or "internal sense,"27 as distinct sources of ideas. Yet Locke makes no attempt to distinguish them as intrinsically different experiences, but only in terms of their ultimate objects, "external objects" and "the operations of the mind,"28 respectively, and the ideas they engender. One might contend in Locke's behalf that by sensation the mind apprehends its objects and by reflection, its acts, and that this suffices to separate them as two kinds of experience. But this distinction between sensation and reflection becomes untenable.

28Ibid.
able once that between the mind's acts and its objects or contents is denied. That James rejects the latter distinction is evident from such statements as the following:

But when I forsake such general descriptions and grapple with particulars, coming to the closest possible quarters with the facts, it is difficult for me to detect in the activity any purely spiritual element at all. Whenever my introspective glance succeeds in turning round quickly enough to catch one of these manifestations of spontaneity in the act, all it can ever feel distinctly is some bodily process, for the most part taking place within the head.29

I sought to show that there is no direct evidence that we feel the activity of an inner spiritual agent as such (I should now say the activity of 'consciousness' as such, [see the first essay], 'Does Consciousness Exist?').30

(It is worth noting at this point that the distinction between the act, content and object of cognition has been dissolved by James.31 For his rejection of the distinction between the content and object of cognition, see above, Chapter I, Section IV.)

The second problematical point is the distinction within the field of experience of a focus and fringe.

James' notion of the "psychic fringe" (see above, Chapter I,

29James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 299-300.

30James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 168.

Section II, i) is here interpreted as being applicable to the field of experience. It will be argued in what follows (see Section I, viii, of this chapter) that James identifies knowing "immediately or intuitively" and knowing as "acquaintance." James further indicates that the content of "acquaintance" is the focus (as opposed to the fringe) of the field of experience, for he asserts that:

If we then consider the cognitive function of different states of mind, we may feel assured that the difference between those that are mere 'acquaintance,' and those that are 'knowledges-about' is reducible almost entirely to the absence or presence of psychic fringes or overtones. Knowledge about a thing is knowledge of its relations. Acquaintance with it is limitation to the bare impression which it makes. Of most of its relations we are only aware in the penumbral nascent way of a 'fringe' of unarticulated affinities about it.

Thus what is argued above is that knowing immediately or intuitively is of a single datum which appears in experience as it actually occurs as part of an experienced whole, and that this datum occupies the focus of the experience and its relations to other things comprise its fringe. Furthermore, since occupying the fringe of the experience are both 'subjective,' 'inner,' or 'mental' data and

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32 James does something like this in several passages. See, for example, "A Suggestion about Mysticism," Collected Essays and Reviews, and pp. 288-289 of A Pluralistic Universe.

33 James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 259.
additional sensory data, the focal datum's relations as felt in its fringe include both 'mental' relations (i.e., some of its relations to the 'mind' which cognizes it) and 'physical' relations (i.e., some of its relations to the 'physical world').

In a passage quoted from earlier (see above, Chapter I, Section IV, i and ii) James utilizes the example of his reader's present experience of the room in which he finds himself and the analogy of two intersecting lines in order to exhibit the nature of pure experience: pure experience being identified with the room as both experience and object and compared with the point of intersection of the two lines:

If the reader will take his own experiences, he will see what I mean. Let him begin with a perceptual experience, the 'presentation,' so called, of a physical object, his actual field of vision, the room he sits in, with the book he is reading as its centre; and let him for the present treat this complex object in the common-sense way as being 'really' what it seems to be, namely, a collection of physical things with which these physical things have actual or potential relations. Now at the same time it is just those self-same things which his mind, as we say, perceives; . . . The puzzle of how the one identical room can be in two places is at bottom just the puzzle of how one identical point can be on two lines. It can, if it be situated at their intersection; and similarly, if the 'pure experience' of the room were a place of intersection of two processes, which connected it with different groups of associates respectively, it could be counted twice over, as belonging to either group, and spoken of loosely as existing in two places, although it would remain all the time a numerically single thing.34

34 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, pp. 11-12.
The passage continues in the following way:

What are the two processes, now, into which the room-experience simultaneously enters in this way?

One of them is the reader's personal biography, the other is the history of the house of which the room is part. The presentation, the experience, the that in short (for until we have decided what it is it must be a mere that) is the last term of a train of sensations, emotions, decisions, movements, classifications, expectations, etc., ending in the present, and the first term of a series of similar 'inner' operations extending into the future, on the reader's part. On the other hand, the very same that is the terminus ad quem of a lot of previous physical operations, carpentering, papering, furnishing, warming, etc., and the terminus a quo of a lot of future ones, in which it will be concerned when undergoing the destiny of a physical room. 35

Illumined by this passage the above description of sense-experience might be elucidated in the following manner: sense-experience corresponds roughly to "the room-experience," the full field of one's present sensory experience, including all of this sensory data, and also, whatever in the way of a mood, emotions, thoughts, images, and so forth, presently occur. Immediate or intuitive cognition corresponds roughly to what lies at the focus of this field, viz., the printed page, or a portion of it, before the reader's eyes and occupying the center of his attention. That the printed page occurs in this experience along with these additional data, some of which are subjective, others of which are sensory, provides this

datum "with opposite contexts." That is to say, corresponding to the fact that "the room-experience" lies at the intersection of "two processes," and that the processes are distinguished as 'mental' ("one of them is the reader's personal biography . . . "a train of sensations, emotions, decisions, movements, classifications, expectations, etc.") and as 'physical' (". . . the other is the history of the house in which the room is part . . . physical operations, carpentering, papering, furnishing, warming, etc.") sense-experience contains elements from both of them, i.e., sense-experience includes—in addition to the focus of the field—both elements such as would belong to the reader's biography, and elements of a kind belonging to the room's history. In other words, sense-experience is a complex cognition in which one apprehends pure experience in a nexus of relations to both a mind and the physical world.

viii

James draws a distinction between knowledge of acquaintance and knowledge-about. Regarding this distinction he states that:

There are two kinds of knowledge broadly and practically distinguishable; we may call them respectively knowledge of acquaintance and knowledge-about. Most languages express the distinction; thus, gnonai,

Ibid., p. 13.
eidenai; noscere, soire; kennen, wissen; connaitre, savoir. I am acquainted with many people and things, which I know very little about, except their presence in the places where I have met them. I know the color blue when I see it, and the flavor of a pear when I taste it; I know an inch when I move my finger through it; a second of time, when I feel it pass; an effort of attention when I make it; a difference between two things when I notice it; but about the inner nature of these facts or what makes them what they are, I can say nothing at all. I cannot impart acquaintance with them to any one who has not already made it himself. I cannot describe them, make a blind man guess what blue is like, define to a child a syllogism, or tell a philosopher in just what respect distance is just what it is, and differs from other forms of relation. At most I can say to my friends, Go to certain places and act in certain ways, and these objects will probably come. All the elementary natures of the world, its highest genera, the simple qualities of matter and mind, together with the kinds of relation that subsist between them, must either not be known at all, or known in this dumb way of acquaintance without knowledge-about.37

That the term "knowledge of acquaintance" is used to designate essentially the same mode of cognition as "knowing immediately or intuitively"—i.e., in that what is cognized is a single fact apart from its various relations to other things—is indicated by such statements as the following:

But in general, the less we analyze a thing and the fewer of its relations we perceive, the less we know about it and the more our familiarity with it is of the acquaintance type.38

Knowledge about a thing is knowledge of its relations. Acquaintance with it is limited to the bare impression

37James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 221.
38Ibid., p. 221.
which it makes.\textsuperscript{39}

It will thus serve to clarify the nature of immediate or intuitive cognition, and thereby the notion of 'pure experience,' to discuss further what James states with regard to knowledge of acquaintance.

James tends to identify knowledge of acquaintance and sensation. He states, for example, that:

Sensation, then, so long as we take the analytic point of view, differs from perception only in the extreme simplicity of its object or content. Its function is that of mere acquaintance with a fact. Perception's function, on the other hand, is knowledge about a fact; and this knowledge admits of numberless degrees of complication.\textsuperscript{40}

James regards sensation as a \textit{sine qua non} for both sense-experience (since it occurs as a component in sense-experience) and cognition in general. He states, for example that:

A pure sensation is an abstraction; and when we adults talk of our 'sensations' we mean one of two things: either certain objects, namely simple qualities or attributes like hard, hot, pain; or else those of our thoughts in which acquaintance with these objects is least combined with knowledge about the relations of them to other things. As we can only think or talk about the relations of objects with which we have acquaintance already, we are forced to postulate a function in our thought whereby we first become aware of the bare immediate natures by which our several objects are distinguished. This function is sensation.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., p. 259.
\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., II, 1-2.
\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., p. 3.
James, like his empiricist predecessors, emphasizes the importance of sensation to conception and discursive thought, stating, for example, that:

Conceptual systems which neither began nor left off in sensations would be like bridges without piers. Systems about fact must plunge themselves into sensation as bridges plunge their piers into the rock. Sensations are the stable rock, the terminus a quo and the terminus ad quem of thought. To find such termini is our aim with all our theories—to conceive first when and where a certain sensation may be had, and then to have it. Finding it stops discussion. Failure to find it kills the false conceit of knowledge. Only when you deduce a possible sensation for me from your theory, and give it to me when and where the theory requires, do I begin to be sure that your thought has anything to do with truth.42

In The Meaning of Truth James contrasts knowing immediately or intuitively and knowing conceptually or representatively, stating that:

There are two ways of knowing things, knowing them immediately or intuitively, and knowing them conceptually or representatively. Although such things as the white paper before our eyes can be known intuitively, most of the things we know, the tigers now in India, for example, or the scholastic system of philosophy, are known only representatively or symbolically.43

In Chapter 8 of Volume I of the Principles of Psychology he makes a rather similar contrast between knowledge of acquaintance and knowledge-about for he states that:

The words feeling and thought give voice to the antithesis. Through feelings we become acquainted

42Ibid., p. 7.
43James, The Meaning of Truth, p. 43.
with things, but only by our thoughts do we know about them.  

However, in Chapter 17 of Volume 2, James makes a threefold distinction, distinguishing between sensation, perception, and thought or conception. He states the following, for example:

But in both sensation and perception we perceive the fact as an immediately present outward reality, and this makes them differ from 'thought' and 'conception,' whose objects do not appear present in this immediate physical way.

According to this classification of modes of cognition knowing immediately or intuitively is to distinguish both from conception and perception.

ix

It would appear that James' distinction between sensation and perception is similar to that introduced between immediate or intuitive cognition and sense-experience. James characterizes the difference between perception and sensation as follows:

The words Sensation and Perception . . . name processes in which we cognize an objective world; both (under normal conditions) need the stimulation of incoming nerves where they can occur; Perception always involves Sensation as a portion of itself; and Sensation in turn never takes place in adult life without Perception also being there. They are therefore names for different cognitive functions, not for different sorts of mental fact. The nearer the

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44 James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 222.
object cognized comes to being a simple quality like 'hot,' 'cold,' 'red,' 'noise,' 'pain,' appre­
hended irrelatively to other things, the more the state of mind approaches pure sensation. The fuller of relations the object is, on the contrary; the more it is something classed, located, measured, compared, assigned to a function, etc., etc.; the more unreservedly do we call the state of mind a perception, and the relatively smaller is the part in it which sensation plays.46

In immediate or intuitive cognition and sense-experience at least part of what is cognized is some portion of physical reality, i.e., physical reality is presented to the mind and not merely represented (i.e., conceived or imagined) by the mind. Sense-experience is the more ample consciousness, containing immediate or intuitive cognition as a constituent and relations to other things as well. Further, of the two kinds of cognition, sense-experience is the form that experience actually assumes. (It should perhaps be emphasized that the distinction between sensation and perception is not that the former is 'in the mind,' whereas the latter is of something 'external to the mind.' As with perception, by sensation "we cognize an objective world.")

There is, however, an important dissimilarity be­
tween perceptual experience and sense-experience. Chap­ter 19 of volume 2 of the Principles of Psychology con­siders "The Perception of Things," and James there

46Ibid., II, 1.
restricts the use of 'perception' to "the consciousness of particular material things present to sense,"\textsuperscript{47} i.e., our cognition of familiar physical objects, such as tables, chairs, trees, and houses. James claims that such objects do not constitute the content of our immediate, momentary sense-experiences, stating, for example, that

In fact, the 'objects' of our perception, as trees, men, houses, microscopes, of which the real world seems composed, are nothing but clusters of qualities which through simultaneous stimulation have so coalesced that the moment one is excited actually it serves as a sign or cue for the idea of the others to arise.\textsuperscript{48}

So when I get, as now, a brown eye-picture with lines not parallel, and with angles unlike, and call it my big solid rectangular walnut library-table, that picture is not the table. It is not even like the table as the table is for vision, when rightly seen. It is a distorted perspective view of three of the sides of what I mentally perceive (more or less) in its totality and undistorted shape. The back of the table, its square corners, its size, its heaviness, are features of which I am conscious when I look, almost as I am conscious of its name. The suggestion of the name is of course due to mere custom. But no less is that of the back, the size, weight, squareness, etc.\textsuperscript{49}

Perception is thus in part the result of "custom," being not simply the present presentation of sense material but the product of its selection and organization along with other such material from past sense-experiences

\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., II, 76. 
\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., I, 555. 
\textsuperscript{49}Ibid., II, 78.
according to such considerations as resemblance, convention and convenience. Thus James states that:

Reproduced sights and contacts tied together with the present sensation in the unity of a thing with a name, these are the complex objective stuff out of which my actually perceived table is made. Infants must go through a long education of the eye and ear before they can perceive the realities which adults perceive. Every perception is an acquired perception.50

Though it is primarily by perception that we cognize the physical world, the world thus cognized is the product of perception as well as what is presented to it. In other words, it is a 'humanized' version of physical reality, a world that is the object and instrument of human interests and endeavors. Sense-experience, on the other hand, is not a cognition of the physical world in its every-day aspect as a gathering of objects given names, uses and conventionized characteristics, being of something both more and less than that world: including relations that a sensation has to the knower and excluding all but the sensation's immediate relations to the physical world. Sense-experience is a 'much-at-onceness' into which crowd and mingle elements of the knower's mental life and aspects of the objects of his physical world. What is presented is not a physical object in all its aspects, but some aspect of an object on which the attention.

50Ibid., II, 78.
tion is focused, framed or fringed, by its mental and physical affinities. (See below, Sections II and III of this chapter, where what is essentially the same distinction [as that between sense-experience and perceptual experience] is made in terms of experience 'as it is given,' and as it is ordered in accords with the concepts we employ.)

This interpretation of the notion of 'pure experience' as designating what is known immediately or intuitively (or by acquaintance, or sensation) seems subject to several criticisms. Only two criticisms will be considered, the first of which might be stated as follows. Sense-experience has been identified with one's momentary consciousness when an instance of a sensory acquaintance with some portion of the external, physical world. Further, it has been claimed that also included in that momentary state is some of its proximate relations to other portions of the physical world and other conscious states. But these relations are, at least in part, temporal relations, hence, it is implied that the so-called 'momentary conscious state' is, in some sense, past and/or future as well as present, and thus not genuinely 'momentary.' But James concurs. The 'present' conscious state is not merely present, for it has duration, and thus, in
a sense, includes part of its own past and future (see above, Chapter I, Section II, v). In other words, the psychological present is 'specious,' and terms such as 'momentary' should be understood here with this in view. Thus what has been argued above regarding sense-experience is that it in some sense includes portions of "the two processes" of which it is a constituent, and in virtue of which the sensory datum at its focus participates in both "the reader's personal biography" and "the history of the house" (see Chapter II, Section I, vii).

The second criticism might be stated as follows. By being construed as designating a simple fact the notion of 'pure experience' is rendered indistinguishable from that of a 'simple idea,' the latter notion being presupposed by "the theory of ideas" which is a theory that James explicitly repudiates (see above, Chapter I, Section II). However, a simple fact is not what is presented as experience (in either perception or sense-experience). Experience as it actually occurs is a concrete whole of which the content of immediate or intuitive cognition is an aspect, element, or whatever. (It may thus seem somewhat perverse to retain the phrase, 'immediate or intuitive cognition,' which suggests a peculiar way of experiencing or distinct cognitive act. There is no real distinction, according to James, between an act of experience and its content (see above, Chapter II, Section I,
vi). It is thus here being claimed merely that corresponding to the phrase 'immediate or intuitive cognition' is a distinguishable content, occurring as somehow included within the content of sense-experience and perception.) Furthermore, not only does sense-experience not occur as a presentation of simple data, but it is only in a special sense that sense-experience contains simple data. The 'simplicity' of pure experience is relative to the complexity of the experienced whole in which it is cognized. Pure experience as such is cognized immediately or intuitively, and it is because knowing after this fashion is to know something in abstraction from everything else that pure experience has been asserted to be cognized as simple. That "simple ideas" are simple, however, is not relative. Their 'simplicity' is ultimate; they are, as it were, the basis building-blocks of experience and mind. In other words, in cognizing pure experience only the stuff of experience is apprehended; to cognize "simple ideas" is also to apprehend its essential structure (see below, Chapter II, Section I, xi, for further discussion of this point).

The identification of knowing immediately or intuitively and knowledge of acquaintance made above (see Chapter II, Section I, viii) is perhaps helpful here. As James in effect points out (see quotation 37 on pages 102
and 103) his use of 'knowledge of acquaintance' reflects something of the ordinary meaning of 'acquaintance,' as applied to persons and familiar sorts of objects. An acquaintance is a person whom one has met, but about whom one may know very little; I know, for example, something of what some particular person looks like (whether tall or short, dark haired or blond, and so forth), having on some occasion met the person, but know nothing at all about the person's circumstances and affiliations (his income, profession, friends, interests, and so forth). Thus one might almost appropriately say that what I know in this instance is a person, but "considered in abstraction from every other event, as if it constituted by itself the universe." What I in this instance know is in a sense 'simple': there is one person which I know, but many things about he or she which I do not know. It is 'simple' only relative to a complex context, regarding which a knowledge-about might be obtained. Analogously, as James uses 'knowledge of acquaintance' the term applies to a sensory datum which is 'simple,' but 'simple' relative to its experiential context, the entire field of experience at some moment. James, for example, does assert with regard to "the color blue" and "the flavor of a pear," that "I cannot describe them, make a blind man

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guess what blue is like, . . ." But this is not, as is often supposed, an argument for "simple ideas," but rather, one for empiricism, for neither can one succeed in conveying by description the total impression received upon meeting certain persons, which experiences are 'complex' if any can be said to be so.

The difference between pure experience and "simple ideas" might be elucidated by means of the following historical comparison. Classical empiricism tended to be nominalistic and its nominalism might be construed as being rooted in the following sort of consideration. The designation of a quality common to a number of particular qualities or objects is usually quite artificial and arbitrary, e.g., instances of different shades of yellow are not in some respect identical, but only similar; all chairs are not identical in some respect, neither are they closely similar with regard to any one characteristic. Locke was sceptical with regard to a knowledge of real essences, Berkeley banished abstract ideas from the mind, Hume replaced essences and universals by an association of ideas, and so forth. Though it came to be acknowledged that the ordering of experience in terms of certain kinds, categories, and so forth, is due in great part to processes of association and not to an inherent order in the world,
it was not generally conceded by the empiricists that processes of discrimination mold our experience in equally important ways. As James states:

But Locke's descendants . . . have so neglected the study of discrimination that one might almost say that the classic English psychologists have, as a school hardly recognized it to exist. 'Association' has proved itself in their hands the one all-absorbing power of the mind.52

James, on the other hand, maintains:

The truth is that Experience is trained by both association and dissociation, and that psychology must be writ both in synthetic and in analytic terms. Our original sensible totals are, on the one hand, subdivided by discriminative attention, and, on the other, united with other totals. . . .53

Just as universals are the product of the association of elements of experience, simple ideas are the result of their discrimination, for "'simple sensations,' namely—are all products of discrimination carried to a high pitch."54 James thus abandons a realism with respect to ultimate particulars as well as universals.

This point may be brought into clearer view by briefly reconsidering the two presuppositions of "the theory of ideas" which James distinguishes and denies (see above, Chapter I, Section II, i). The "theory of ideas" presupposes that experience consists of contents

52 James, Principles of Psychology, I, 484.
53 Ibid., I, 487.
54 Ibid.
that are atomic and recurrent (qualitatively identical with others). Yet the content 'yellow,' for example, is not an ultimate simple. No experience ever occurs which is just, 'yellow,' nor is 'yellow' the invariable outcome of making discriminations within an experience containing such a content: "The noticing of any part whatever of our object is an act of discrimination." Furthermore, the content 'yellow,' occurring as something to be discriminated within a particular experience, is not the same content 'yellow' occurring as part of some other particular experience. They, are of course, similar and are therefore easily associated, and it is this association that gives rise to the specious identity.

Section II

i

The second interpretation of the notion of 'pure experience' proposed above and now to be discussed is that pure experience is the 'given order' of experience. Consider the following passage from James' writings:

The world's contents are given to each of us in an order so foreign to our subjective interests that we can hardly by an effort of the imagination picture to ourselves what it is like. We have to break that order altogether,—and by picking out from it the items which concern us, and connecting them with others far away, which we say "belong" with them, we are able to make out definite threads

55Ibid.
of sequence and tendency; to fore-see particular liabilities and get ready for them; and to enjoy simplicity and harmony in place of what was chaos. Is not the sum of your actual experience taken at this moment and impartially added together an utter chaos? The strains of my voice, the lights and shades inside the room and out, the murmur of the wind, the ticking of the clock, the various organic feelings you may happen individually to possess, do these make a whole at all? Is it not the only condition of your mental sanity in the midst of them that most of them should become non-existent for you, and that a few others—the sounds, I hope, which I am uttering— should evoke from places in your memory that have nothing to do with this scene associates fitted to combine with them in what we call a rational train of thought,—rational, because it leads to a conclusion which we have some organ to appreciate? We have no organ or faculty to appreciate the simply given order.56

This description of "the simply given order [of experience]" is similar to that of pure experience provided by such passages as the following:

'?Pure experience' is the name which I gave to the immediate flux of life which furnishes the material to our later reflection with its conceptual categories. Only new-born babes, or men in semi-coma from sleep, drugs, illnesses, or blows, may be assumed to have an experience pure in the literal sense of a that which is not yet any definite what, tho' ready to be all sorts of whats; full both of oneness and of manyness, but in respects that don't appear; changing throughout, yet so confusedly that its phases interpenetrate and no points, either of distinction or of identity, can be caught. Pure experience in this state is but another name for feeling or sensation.57

There are numerous and obvious parallels between these passages, for example, the following: In the first

56 James, Essays on Faith and Morals, p. 118.
57 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, pp. 93-94.
passage James writes of "the sum of your actual experience taken at this moment," in the second, of "the immediate flux of life." It is asserted in the first passage that "we can hardly by an effort of the imagination picture to ourselves what it is like," in the second, it is assumed to occur only to "new-born babes, or men in semi-coma from sleep, drugs, illness, or blows." In the first passage it is claimed that we are unable "to appreciate the simply given order"; that which we do appreciate is the given content of experience with another order imposed upon it. It is claimed in the second passage that pure experience "furnishes the material to our later reflection with its conceptual categories." The first passage depicts the order in which experience is given as "an utter chaos" and the second passage characterizes pure experience as "a that which is not yet any definite what."

However, several discrepancies between the two passages should be noted. First, in the former passage it is implied that experience is originally given as ordered in some fashion. James writes of "the simply given order": "We have to break that order altogether"; only then can experience be organized in meaningful ways. It is "an utter chaos" in the sense that its order is alien and unintelligible, for "we have no organ or faculty to appreci-
ate" it. In the latter of the two passages, James portrays pure experience as "a that which is not yet any definite what." It is here suggested that pure experience is a chaos in the sense that it is completely without order, being "plain, unqualified actuality, or existence, a simple that."\(^{58}\)

This disparity between the two passages is, however, only apparent, for the latter passages continue in this manner:

Far back as we go, the flux, both as a whole and in its parts, is that of things conjunct and separated. The great continua of time, space, and the self envelope everything, betwixt them, and flow together without interfering. The things that they envelope come as separate in some ways and as continuous in others. Some sensations coalesce with some ideas, and others are irreconcilable. Qualities compenetrate one space, or exclude each other from it. They cling together persistently in groups that move as units, or else they separate. Their changes are abrupt or discontinuous; and their kinds resemble or differ; and, as they do so, they fall into either even or irregular series.

In all this the continuities and the discontinuities are absolutely co-ordinate matters of immediate feeling. The conjunctions are as primordial elements of 'fact' as are the distinctions and disjunctions.\(^{59}\)

Indeed, that experience in its original or immediate form is ordered or connected in some way is a thesis frequently and forcefully stated in James' writings. Con-

\(^{58}\)Ibid., p. 23.

\(^{59}\)Ibid., pp. 94-95.
sider, for example, the following:

The account I give directly contradicts that which Kant gave which has prevailed since Kant's time. Kant always speaks of the aboriginal sensible flux as a 'manifold' of which he considers the essential character to be its disconnectedness. To get any togetherness at all into it requires, he thinks, the agency of the 'transcedental ego of apperception,' and to get any definite connections requires the agency of the understanding, with its synthetizing concepts or 'categories.'

He would in fact see in this thesis philosophy's antidote for the bite of the serpent, intellectualism or rationalism. He asserts, for example:

Now, ordinary empiricism, in spite of the fact that conjunctive and disjunctive relations present themselves as being fully co-ordinate parts of experience, has always shown a tendency to do away with the connections of things, and to insist most on the disjunctions.

The natural result of such a world-picture has been the efforts of rationalism to correct its incoherencies by the addition of transexperiential agents of unification, substances, intellectual categories and powers, or Selves; whereas, if empiricism has only been radical and taken everything that comes without disfavor, conjunction as well as separation, each at its face value, the results would have called for no such artificial correction.

A second discrepancy between the above pair of passages (see Section II, i, of this chapter) is that the first attributes the subsequent or derivative order of

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60 James, *Some Problems of Philosophy*, p. 51.

61 James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, pp. 42-44.
experience to our agency. It is we, as active though intellectual beings, who "break" the original order by "picking out" and "connecting" certain of its elements in contrived ways in order "to enjoy simplicity and harmony in place of what was chaos." By our art and efficacy we cut or cull from the material of experience an order conforming to our demands for interest and intelligibility. This view might be stated as follows:

. . . it is we who project order into the world by selecting objects and tracing relations so as to gratify our intellectual interests. We carve out order by leaving the disorderly parts out; and the world is conceived thus after the analogy of a forest or a block of marble from which parks or statues may be produced by eliminating irrelevant trees or chips of stone.62

According to the second passage, however, it would appear that the ensuring, intelligible order emerges spontaneously, for here James claims that pure experience is "ready to be all sorts of whats; full both of oneness and manyness, but in respects that don't appear" and that it "no sooner comes than it" begins to assume an intelligible order. The metaphor which suggests itself for depicting the view implied by the first passage is that of the intelligible order as the work which the sculptor carves from the stone. The second passage, on the other hand, suggests that this order grows from pure experience, as a

62James, A Pluralistic Universe, pp. 9-10.
plant from its seed or soil, or foliage or flower from the stem.

The former of the two views would seem to be the one to which James most closely adheres. According to James, to order experience is essentially to correlate its elements with concepts. He asserts, for example:

To 'explain' means to coordinate, one to one, the thises of the perceptual flow with the whats of the ideal manifold, whichever it be.63

In turn, concepts are of the nature of recipes for the satisfaction of human aims and interests. Accordingly, he asserts:

We harness perceptual reality in concepts in order to drive it better to our ends.64

Every way of classifying a thing is but a way of handling it for some particular purpose. Conceptions, 'kinds,' are teleological instruments.65

This way of conceiving experience's reordering allows an approach to drawing the distinction between experience as given and as reordered which is somewhat promising. (It will also be seen (see Chapter IV and following) to be of some importance for James' pragmatism.)

Purposes, as one might put it, do not occur in Nature, and therefore, are not to be found 'in' experience in so

63 James, Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 71.
64 Ibid., p. 65.
65 James, Essays on Faith and Morals, p. 70.
far as it is merely 'of' the physical world. However, stopping somewhere short of Kant (see above, for example, the quotation at the top of page 120), it can be maintained that such experience is nonetheless in some significant degree and intelligible sense ordered, since other kinds of order than teleological order are conceivable. Hence, in so far as James can assimilate the notion of 'concept' to that of 'purpose' (it being also maintained that the reordering of experience is essentially the result of the inclusion or influence of concepts), he can maintain that experience as given is ordered, yet not in such a way as to be the experience which is that of our operative and intelligent adult lives. (The distinction implied here between relations as 'given' in experience and as part of the physical world, and as imposed on that experience by a mind, will be developed in Section III of this chapter.)

This teleological view of the nature of conception is an instance or application of a fundamental principle, which James states as follows:

The pursuance of future ends and the choice of means for their attainment are thus the mark and criterion of the presence of mentality in a phenomenon.66

Reality, i.e., experience as given, is not teleologically ordered and is therefore fundamentally unintelligible to

66 James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 8.
us. It thus becomes our inescapable task to so order it.

iv

A third discrepancy between the above pair of passages (see Section II, i, of this chapter) is that the first seems, in some sense, to be a description of our present, adult experience ("Is not the sum of your actual experience taken at this moment . . ."), whereas, the second seems, as a description, to be applicable only to our past, infant experience ("'Pure experience' . . . furnishes the material for our later reflection with its conceptual categories"). It is to be noted, however, that the way of 'taking' our experience indicated in the first passage ("the sum of your actual experience taken at this moment and impartially added together . . .") is essentially the way in which the infant must 'take' it, for

... any number of impressions, from any number of sensory sources, falling simultaneously on a mind which has not yet experienced them separately, will fuse into a single undivided object for that mind. The law is that all things fuse that can fuse, and nothing separates except what must. . . . 67

For the infant, experience is simply "the sum" of its sensations at any moment—sights, sounds, tastes, internal sensations, and so forth, being "impartially added together"—without being discriminated, associated, and so forth. Accordingly, its experience is perhaps best de-

67Ibid., I, 488.
scribed by the term 'chaos,' since:

The baby, assailed by eyes, ears, nose, skin, and entrails at once, feels it all as one great blooming buzzing confusion; . . .68

Hence, infant experience (if it can be so called) and experience as it is given, should have essentially the same content and character.

In contrast Locke describes the experience of the infant and its development as follows:

Follow a child from its birth, and observe the alterations, that time makes, and you shall find, as the mind by the senses comes more and more to be furnished with ideas, it comes to be more and more awake; thinks more, the more it has matter to think on. After some time it begins to know the objects which, being most familiar with it, have made lasting impressions. Thus it comes by degrees to know the persons it daily converses with, and distinguishes them from strangers; which are instances and effects of its coming to retain and distinguish the ideas the senses convey to it. And so we may observe how the mind, by degrees, improves in these; and advances to the exercise of those other faculties of enlarging, compounding, and abstracting its ideas, and of reasoning about them, and reflecting upon all these; of which I shall have occasion to speak more hereafter.69

Somewhat like the beginning student who must first learn his 'a, b, c's' before writing down his own thoughts, the child must receive much instruction from experience ("more and more to be furnished with ideas") before he is able to organize it for himself. He must first come to "know the

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68 Ibid.
69 Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, I, 140-141.
objects" which make up his world, or "retain and distinguish the ideas the senses convey."

But experience as something at all intelligible, presupposes the activity of the knower, i.e., the apprehension and application of concepts. Experience (as given) is not to knowledge in general as is learning the 'a, b, c's.' Rather, learning the rudiments of reading and writing is essentially learning to use certain basic conceptual tools. It is thus with the acquisition of concepts that learning begins; and in a more general way, the same is true of experience (as in any degree intelligible). Contrary to Locke's statements, it is to be supposed that certain rudimentary concepts are among the first cognitive achievements of a child, for his first task is to learn how to experience his world, and not, that his world consists of such-and-such objects.70

v

From the above one is led to conclude that James identifies pure experience with the given order of experience. However, this view of pure experience raises several possible objections. Only one of these will be stated for discussion: if the order of experience as given is a chaos as regards human concerns and comprehen-

70 A footnote should here be dedicated, as it were, to Stephanie Aspasia, as the above point was suggested by my observing her own development.
sion, it can make no sense to claim that it is nonetheless ordered; and even if it can be granted that it is ordered, if experience as given is a chaos in the above sense, something analogous to "the agency of the 'transcendental ego of appreception'" or "the agency of the understanding, with its synthesizing 'categories'" is required in order to impose an intelligible order. In other words, James cannot succeed in maintaining that experience as given is ordered and therefore no transcendental agency is presupposed to bestow the order found in experience.

James maintains that it is primarily by selecting certain components and their connections from those that occur as constituting the original order of experience that the subsequent order is created (a different discussion of what is perhaps essentially the same problem is to be found in Chapter III, Section II, vii). James maintains that one of the "fine characters of thought" is that:

It is interested in some parts of these objects to the exclusion of others, and welcomes or rejects—chooses from among them, in a word—all the while.

We thus adapt the old order to serve our ends, i.e., by appropriating only part of it we modify it in suitable ways.

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71 James, Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 51.


73 James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 225.
The changes thus made amount to producing a new order, but this order is not, so to speak, created *ex nihilo*. To use a Darwinian simile, we adapt ourselves to the given order of experience somewhat as any organism must adapt to its environments. Yet as intelligent and effective organisms, we in turn adapt our environment or serve our ends, and in somewhat similar ways we utilize experience as given, taking account of it, and in some ways accommodating it, in order to achieve our practical and intellectual ends. James sets forth such a view in the following way:

The substitution of concepts and their connections, of a whole conceptual order, in short, for the immediate perceptual flow, thus widens enormously our mental panorama. Had we no concepts we should live simple 'getting' each successive moment of experience, as the sessile seaanemone on its rock receives whatever nourishment the wash of the waves may bring. With concepts we go in quest of the absent, meet the remote, actively turn this way or that, bend our experience, and make it tell us whither it is bound. We change its order, run it backwards, bring far bits together and separate near bits, jump about over its surface instead of plowing through its continuity, string its items on as many ideal diagrams as our mind can frame. All these are ways of handling the perceptual flux and meeting distant parts of it; and as far as this primary function of conception goes, we can only conclude it to be what I began by calling it, a faculty super-added to our barely perceptual consciousness for its use in practically adapting us to a larger environment than that of which brutes take account.74

It might be objected that we are not generally aware that our aims and interests mold our apprehension

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74 James, *Some Problems of Philosophy*, pp. 64-65.
of our world to such an extent. Indeed, it would seem unlikely that we should generally be aware of their influence, since it is, according to James, so potent and pervasive. Analogously, one is generally unconscious of various vital processes, such as respiration, because they perpetually occur. In this sense, the ordering of the given content of experience in accord with our purposes occurs somewhat spontaneously. It is also to be acknowledged that the concepts with which an individual interprets his experience may not be of his own making, nor are the purposes 'build-into' these concepts, as it were, necessarily a purpose for that individual. Concepts are generally—if not always—the product of the ends and experience of a whole culture, if not the whole race. Thus James states that:

My thesis now is this, that our fundamental ways of thinking about things are discoveries of exceedingly remote ancestors, which have been able to preserve themselves throughout the experience of all subsequent time. They form one great state of equilibrium in the human mind's development, the stage of common sense. Other stages have grafted themselves upon this stage, but have never succeeded in displacing it.  

One might also object to this view by asserting that according to James the given order of experience is utterly incomprehensible to us and that we can conceivably adapt to our ends only what is inherently comprehensible.

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James, *Pragmatism*, p. 114.
It would seem that the above simile is misleading at this point, for we adapt experience as given to render it intelligible but adapt our environment to make it inhabitable. We cannot actively adapt to an environment which we fail to comprehend—hence the immense practical value which our comprehending our experience has. Adapting (to) experience, on the other hand, means, for James, rendering it intelligible.

One might claim, however, that James goes to far as to make experience as given completely inaccessible to us; after all, he submits that "only new-born babes, or men in semi-coma from sleep, drugs, illnesses, or blows, may be assumed to have"\textsuperscript{76} such experience. Thus it would seem that experience as given occurs only as an unconscious state. Yet this is a misleading way of representing its nature. It is tempting to think of unconsciousness as a privation, so to speak, of consciousness, i.e., as a special sort of void or emptiness. It can be surmised that this way of picturing unconsciousness is the other side of a coin which was common currency among eighteenth century empiricists, viz., that consciousness is the presence of something (an idea, for example) \textit{in the mind}; and just as James rejects this view of consciousness (see above, Sections III and IV of Chapter I), it is to be presumed that

\textsuperscript{76}James, \textit{Essays in Radical Empiricism}, p. 93.
he discards the view that unconsciousness is the absence of anything in the mind. The depiction of unconsciousness that James' discussion of the given of experience evokes is that of a plenum, rather than a void. He asserts, for example, of the 'experience' of the "new-born babe" that it is "one great booming, buzzing confusion." Conscious experience is carved out of this superfluity, being an abridgment of the original abundance. A "whole experience" in which "no fraction of anything is lost" may be truth for an Absolute, but for us it overwhelms and confounds. Yet such a plenum of experience is not necessarily inaccessible. It is, however, incomprehensible, and occurs on an unconscious level in the sense that our conscious moments are lived in the midst of a world that is to a large extent comprehensible. In a word, consciousness does not presuppose merely the presence of an object or content, but one that is in some degree comprehensible.

Section III

The two interpretations of James' notion of 'pure experience' given above (viz., that pure experience is that which when cognized as such is cognized immediately or intuitively, and that pure experience is the given order of

77 James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 488.

78 Bradley, Appearance and Reality, p. 161.
experience; see Sections I and II of this chapter) might be compared in terms of two passages from James' writing centering on the same example, viz., one's experience of a room in which one is presently situated. One of these passages is quoted above on pages 100 and 101 in connection with the first interpretation of the notion of 'pure experience,' and the other, considered in connection with the second interpretation, appears above on pages 116 and 117.

In the former passage James has the reader to consider "the room he sits in, with the book he is reading as its center" and to regard it as "a collection of physical things," but also to suppose that "at the same time it is just those self-same things which his mind, as we say, perceives." What James has his reader suppose is that "those self-same things" constitute both the room experienced and the experience of the room, and that they are both of these things because they are "cut out from an environing world of other physical things with which these physical things have actual or potential relations" and are also part of "the reader's personal biography." Yet apart from these other things, "these self-same things" are neither the room nor an experience of it, but an instance of pure experience.

In the latter passage, James has the listener con-
sider his experience as he sits in the lecture hall. If this experience is considered merely as it is given, it is an instance of pure experience. It includes such items as "the strains of my voice, the lights and shades inside the room and out, the murmur of the wind, the ticking of the clock, the various organic feelings you may happen to possess," yet these experienced elements—so James claims—do not "make a whole at all" but are "an utter chaos."

"Our subjective interests" are excluded from "the world's contents" as "given," but the world as we know it in ordinary adult experience is conditioned by them, i.e., this world is created or constituted both by "our subjective interests" and "the world's contents" as they are "given."

In the explication of the first interpretation of the notion of 'pure experience,' pure experience was distinguished from perception (see above, Chapter II, Section I, ix), and in the explication of the second, it was distinguished from experience as reconstructed and interpreted in accord with basic human interests (see above, Chapter II, Section II, iii, and following). Perception was described as involving a selection and organization of the content of sense-experience, and sense-experience, as an experienced whole of heterogeneous aspects, identified
with momentary, immediate consciousness when inclusive of sensory data. Thus the notion of perception answers roughly to that of experience as reordered, and that of sense-experience, to that of the given order of experience. Thus far, the two interpretations of the notion of 'pure experience' agree, viz., on the point that pure experience is 'pure' with regard to the organizing influence of concepts. Pure experience is what is directly experienced, apart from everything which the mind might bring to bear to render it more amenable to intelligibility and action.

Yet these two notions of 'pure experience' are not one and the same. In accord with the first, to cognize pure experience is to cognize an entity exclusive of all of its relations to others, "as if it constituted by itself the universe," and in accord with the second, pure experience includes some relations (see above, Chapter II, Section II, ii and following). That is to say, on the one hand, all of an entity's relations lie outside of what is cognized (immediately or intuitively), on the other, some of them lie within (experience as given).

More precisely, the difference between the two notions of 'pure experience' amounts to this. According to the first, experience is viewed not only in abstraction

from those conceptual relations which we bring to it, thereby rendering it more intelligible, but also in abstraction from those experienced relations which experience brings to us, thereby revealing it (the experience) as physical (a portion of the physical world) or only mental (a non-veridical experience). According to the second, pure experience is viewed in abstraction only from those various conceptual relations. Pure experience, conceived in the latter way, may disclose that something is (that the experience is veridical) but not what it is (the experience's place in our conceptual scheme).

Stated with the help of the second of the two quotations referred to above, though the experience of the lecture room as given is a chaos of directly felt experience, "by picking out items which concern us, and connecting them with others far away, which we say "belong" with them, we are able to make out definite threads of sequence and tendency." Thus one present in the room is able to pick out from his other sensations the sounds made by James' voice and to connect them and their meanings so as to form "a rational train of thought." This could not be done without a sophisticated conceptual scheme; without it the listener could presumably feel some qualitative difference between the sound of James' voice and the ticking of the clock, for example, but this would not take him
very far toward following James' lecture.

Hence, if someone listening to James' lecture could simultaneously attend to everything within his field of experience, he would know experience as it is given. Instead he follows "a rational train of thought." Attending to James' utterances, he attempts to grasp the meaning of his sentences, makes inferences from them, pursues ideas they suggest, affirms them, is puzzled by them or indredulous, responds with interest, is bored and thinks of a fishing trip to come, and so forth. This train of thought is constitutive of a mental history, i.e., of the mind of the listener. On the other hand, the ticking of the clock, the murmur of the wind, and other sights and sounds to which he does not, but might, attend are constitutive of the history of the lecture hall and its physical surroundings.

Two sorts of views are possible as to how this separation of experience as given into mental and physical "threads of sequence and tendency" come about, viz., this separation is either imposed on, or discerned in, experience as it is given. If it is imposed, i.e., is conventional or contrived, experience as given is neither physical nor mental in nature. Thus far the view is consistent with James' neutral monism, as James maintains that pure experience is neither mental nor physical. The notion of the physical and the mental, however, cannot on this view
be construed as ontological, i.e., descriptive of the structure of reality. They merely reflect one of several ways—though a fundamental way—in which we reconstruct experience as given. In this respect the view is inconsistent with James' neutral monism. If the mental and physical orders are, on the other hand, discerned, the distinction between them is implicit in experience as given, i.e., the separation of a mental and physical order is the result of discerning this distinction. These orders are thus ontological orders. However, according to this view experience as given is both mental and physical in nature, which is inconsistent with James' neutral monism.

It is thus the first of these two notions of 'pure experience' (viz., that pure experience is that which when cognized as such is cognized immediately or intuitively) which is the central notion in James' neutral monism, i.e., which designates the "one primal stuff or material in the world, . . . of which everything is composed." For according to James' neutral monism, the mental and physical have a genuine ontological status (i.e., that a portion of reality is either mental and/or physical is not something that our thinking imposes on it) and also pure experience is a 'neutral' stuff, (i.e., it has neither

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80 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 4.
(nor both) mental nor physical characteristics). But, as argued above, if pure experience is identified with experience as it is given, either the 'neutral' status of pure experience (if the relations in virtue of which entities are mental or physical are 'given') or the ontological status of the mental and physical (if such relations are not 'given') is forfeited.

ii

It has so far been argued that the two notions of 'pure experience' discussed in this chapter are not identical notions, and also that it is the former notion which is the more essential to James' neutral monism. But this is not to say that the two notions are incompatible. These notions are of different kinds, i.e., they serve different roles in James' philosophy. The first is essentially an ontological notion, and the second, a psychological one. As an ontological notion, 'pure experience' designates 'pure' reality, as it were, being completely undifferentiated as mental or physical in character. It is the stuff or material of experience, both as given and reconstructed in various ways, and also that of physical reality as unexperienced (but not, of course, as unexperiencable). As a psychological notion, 'pure experience' designates experience in its 'purest' (most immediate and original) form, but, nonetheless, the content of a mode of
cognition. There is 'more' to (ontological) pure experience than what in any instance is cognized (since it is also the stuff of all that is not 'then and there' cognized); there is 'more' to cognition than (psychological) pure experience (since it is also the stuff which conception reorders). That is to say, the psychological notion places direct experience in relation to the more developed levels of our cognitive life; the ontological notion places it in relation to an ontological scheme by locating that cognitive life itself in a wider scheme of things. Thus, by distinguishing but including both a psychological and an ontological notion of 'pure experience' in James' philosophy, it can be understood as both an empiricism and a realism. The Lockean thesis that all ideas originate in experience is retained, though modified, and at the same time, this original experience is a direct acquaintance with physical entities and their relations.

Furthermore, this distinction between a psychological and ontological notion of 'pure experience' renders several of James' views more—rather than less—defensible. As mentioned above, the distinction allows for both James' empiricism and his realism. It also assists in reconciling his realism and his pragmatism. (It might indeed be said that whereas the ontological notion of 'pure experi-
ence' plays a central role in James' neutral monism, the psychological notion plays an analogous role in his pragmatism.) As a fuller discussion of James' pragmatism is forthcoming (see below, Chapter IV), only an outline of the argument will be given here. James' pragmatism is concerned primarily with clarifying and confirming concepts, but (psychological) pure experience lacks this conceptual component: since concepts are not given—rather we give them to experience. Thus to a certain extent, experience is amorphous and malleable and our dealings with it allow for some 'free play.' Yet (psychological) pure experience is not devoid of ontological elements. It includes a direct acquaintance with physical reality, i.e., physical entities and those relations in virtue of which they are 'physically real.' This is not, of course to say that (psychological) pure experience gives us a physical world. There is yet no spatial nor causal continua, for example, but spatial and causal relations are there; only what can be directly experienced is present, and not also what requires conceptualization. Nonetheless, (psychological) pure experience includes a rudimentary cognition (i.e., a bare sensory acquaintance) of fundamental relations between portions of physical reality, among these relations being those which lie at the root of the ontological distinction between the mental and physical. Thus 'what is true' (as concepts are here
involved) awaits our thought and action, but 'what is real' (physical entities and the relations in which they occur) is 'given' in experience. Our conceptual scheme does not correspond to the given order of experience, but imposes an order on it, but our concepts regarding the physical world must still be returned to experiences as given and 'tested' there.

Further, the rebuttal to the objection raised above (the objection to the effect that James cannot consistently maintain that pure experience is both 'pure,' or 'chaotic,' and also that it possesses some kind and degree of order (see Section II, vi, of this chapter) can be clarified with the help of the distinction between the psychological and ontological notions of 'pure experience.' With regard to both notions of 'pure experience,' as a basic stuff, pure experience is relatively formless, i.e., as 'pure' it is without various relations which would give it form or order. But the sorts of relations from which pure experience is viewed 'in abstraction' differ in the two cases, differing essentially as experienced and conceptual relations. (Psychological) pure experience is chaotic vis-a-vis experienced as ordered by concepts, and it is indeed a chaos in that without the application of concepts to it, it is unintelligible to us. But it is (ontological) pure experience, the cognition of
one of reality's portions, "as if it constituted by itself the universe,"\textsuperscript{81} which is completely abstracted from, and therefore utterly devoid of, all connections to other things.

Finally, the distinction between these two notions of 'pure experience' makes it possible to defend James' neutral monism against the charge of panpsychism (see above, page 90). It was argued above that sense-experience includes both mental and physical components (Chapter II, Section I, v and following). It has also been pointed out above (see Chapter II, Section III, i) that experience as given is essentially the same as sense-experience. But it does not then follow that the ontological stuff of which everything—both minds and physical things—are composed is both physical and mental in its inherent character, for experience as given corresponds to the psychological—and not the ontological—notation of pure experience. The psychological notion of 'pure experience' is essentially that of a rudimentary mental stuff: a stuff which is both immediate experience and that from which every higher (more conceptual) level of mentality is formed (by being ordered by conceptual relations). On the other hand, the ontological notion of pure experience is that of a stuff which is neither mental nor physical in

\textsuperscript{81}James, \textit{The Meaning of Truth}, p. 48.
nature. In other words, according to the ontological notion of 'pure experience,' pure experience is that which—when known as such—is known immediately and intuitively. Pure experience is thus not here conceived simply as that which is known immediately and intuitively, or in any other way. Being the "one primal stuff or material in the [mental and physical] world" or "a stuff of which everything [both mental and physical] is composed," (ontological) pure experience must conceivably occur or exist 'outside of' consciousness (i.e., as uncognized, though not, uncognizable). Though (ontological) pure experience was above described in terms of how it is known (see above, Section I, iv and v of this chapter) that introspective description is not to be understood as "an inventory of consciousness as of that wherein a universe resides." (Ontological) pure experience occurs in experience, because our consciousness is always a portion of the universe, of the same 'stuff' as that of all its many portions.

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82 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 4.
84 In the remainder of this paper, where it is not specified as to which of the two notions of pure experience distinguished above is involved, the ontological notion is to be understood as being employed.
iv

What is asserted above concerning the two interpretations of James' notion of 'pure experience' which have been discussed might be clarified by means of the following historical comparison. James' notion of 'pure experience'--and the character of his thought in general--appears to bear the imprint of a double influence, viz., the English empiricist tradition and the absolute idealism then prevailing in England and America. Further, the two interpretations of this notion discussed correspond in a general way to these two influences on James' thought, i.e., the first interpretation to the empiricist influence, and the second to the idealist influence.

The first interpretation (that pure experience is that which when cognized as such is cognized immediately or intuitively) links the notion with our cognition of reality through knowledge of acquaintance (see above, Section I, viii of this chapter). Knowledge of acquaintance has an epistemological pre-eminence for in knowing in this way our knowledge and external reality coincide; "to know immediately, then, or, intuitively, is for mental content and object to be identical."85 Such knowledge is consummate in the sense that it is of the most intimate sort conceivable for in knowing in this way one knows

85James, Meaning of Truth, pp. 49-50.
reality from within, as it were, the conscious state being that reality. The notion of 'pure experience' thus underlies James' commitment to directly felt experience, the nature of pure experience being that in virtue of which it is cognitively consummate.

James' notion of 'pure experience' (according to the first interpretation) not only underlies and illuminates his empiricism understood as a declaration of the epistemological primacy of knowledge of acquaintance, but also his empiricism conceived as a pluralistic approach:

Empiricism . . . lays the explanatory stress upon the part, the element, the individual and . . . starts with the parts and makes of the whole a being of the second order. 86

It was stated above that knowledge of acquaintance is cognitively consummate in the sense that it is knowledge of the most immediate and intimate sort conceivable, with such knowledge the very stuff or content of reality is comprehended. Yet, in another sense, such knowledge is not consummate; no instance of knowledge of acquaintance can be complete or conclusive for its content is apprehended "in abstraction from every other event, as if it constituted by itself the universe." 87 Although immediate, such knowledge is momentary, though it comprehends

86 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 41.
87 James, Meaning of Truth, p. 48.
reality itself, it does so only in a piecemeal manner: what it has in the way of penetration, so to speak, it lacks in the way of extent. In other words, James' notion of 'pure experience' implies both that nothing 'lies beyond or outside' experience (i.e., as a reality transcending what is experiencable, since the stuff of reality is also that of experience) and that something always 'lies beyond or outside' what is in any instance actually experienced. Because experience is thus partial and progressive physical reality can be distinguished from experience, not as another stuff, quality, or order of reality, but as that which lies outside what is presently experienced but not outside what is experiencable (see above, Chapter I, Section IV, vii). That is to say, the stuff of all reality is the same, it differs (as mental or physical) only in its relations (i.e., as to whether or not it is 'then and there' someone's experience).

v

The second interpretation of James' notion of 'pure experience' (according to which pure experience is experience as it is given) in effect emphasizes the sufficiency, diversity and unity of experience. In experience as it is given is to be found--though in some crude and confused form--the various features of reality that our knowledge will eventually exhibit. Thus James submits
that:

In his dumb awakening to the consciousness of something there, . . . the infant encounters an object in which (though it be given in a pure sensation) all the 'categories of the understanding' are contained. It has objectivity, unity, substantiality, causality, in the full sense in which any later object or system of objects has these things.88

This notion of a reality has its parallel in absolute idealism. Bradley, for example, finds in immediate experience a partial disclosure of the nature of reality, i.e., of the Absolute, whereby one may "gain an idea of its main features—an idea true so far as it goes, though abstract and incomplete."89 He states, for example, that:

First, in mere feeling, or immediate presentation, we have the experience of a whole. . . . This whole contains diversity, and, on the other hand, is not parted by relations. Such an experience, we must admit, is most imperfect and unstable, and its inconsistencies lead us at once to transcend it. Indeed, we hardly possess it as more than that which we are in the act of losing. But it serves to suggest to us the general idea of a total experience, where will and thought and feeling may all once more be one. . . . Thus we know what is meant by an experience, which embraces all divisions, and yet somehow possesses the direct nature of feeling. We can form the general idea of an absolute experience in which phenomenal distinctions are merged, a whole become immediate at a higher stage without losing any richness.90

88 James, The Principles of Psychology, II, 8.
89 Bradley, Appearance and Reality, p. 140.
90 Ibid., pp. 140-141.
But Bradley fails to discover relations of any sort in immediate experience, as, according to him, it "is not parted by relations" (and even where he finds relations he claims that "our experience, where relational, is not true"\(^9\)) and he claims it to be "most imperfect and unstable." Thus the Absolute, in that it "embraces all differences in an inclusive harmony,"\(^9\) must somehow be a "unity which transcends . . . every manifold appearances."\(^9\) To Bradley James replies:

Bradley in short repeats the fable of the dog, the bone, and its image in the water. With a world of particulars, given in loveliest union, in conjunction definitely various, and variously definite, the 'how' of which you 'understand' as soon as you see the fact of them, for there is no 'how' except the constitution of the fact as given; with all this given him, I say, in pure experience, he asks for some ineffable union in the abstract instead, which, if he gained it, would only be a duplicate of what he has already in his full possession.\(^9\)

Thus James can assert that:

Here, then, inside of the minimal pulses of experience, is realized that very inner complexity which the transcendentalists say only the absolute can genuinely possess.\(^9\)

But it is individual pulses or portions of experience that

\(^{9}\)Ibid., p. 29.

\(^{9}\)Ibid., p. 123.

\(^{9}\)Ibid., p. 141.

\(^{9}\)James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, pp. 120-121.

\(^{9}\)James, A Pluralistic Universe, p. 284.
James claims to have this sort of complexity and coherence, he stops far short of claiming for any whole of experience that it has the nature of the Absolute:

... the Absolute is not many; there are no independent reals. The universe is one in this sense that its differences exist harmoniously within one whole, beyond which there is nothing. Hence the Absolute is, so far, an individual and a system, ... 96

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96 Bradley, Appearance and Reality, p. 127.
CHAPTER III

The present chapter will continue the discussion of James' neutral monism by further explicating his view of the nature of the relations in virtue of which an entity is either mental and/or physical, and also complement the preceding discussion of James' theory of perception (see above, Chapter I, Section IV) with one regarding his view of non-perceptual or conceptual cognition. The purpose of the foregoing discussion of pure experience and that of the ways in which pure experience is related such that mental and physical entities result which is to follow is to adequately explicate James' neutral monism; that of the discussion of his respective views regarding the nature of perception and conception is to lay a groundwork for tracing some of the implications of James' neutral monism for his pragmatism.

Section I

The passage drawn from James' writings with which the discussion of his neutral monism began will again serve as a port of departure; it states that:

My thesis is that if we start with the supposition

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that there is only one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed, and if we call that stuff 'pure experience,' then knowing can easily be explained as a particular sort of relation towards one another into which portions of pure experience may enter. The relation itself is a part of pure experience; one of its 'terms' becomes the subject or bearer of the knowledge, the knower, the other becomes the object known.  

James is here maintaining one of four views concerning the character of consciousness: either consciousness is itself a particular sort of relation among portions of pure experience; or consciousness is the terms in such a relation, i.e., pure experience in so far as it is thus related; or consciousness is made up of both such a relation and its terms; or consciousness is the term in the relation to be designated as the subject or knower. James tells us in the immediately above passage that "knowing can easily be explained as a particular sort of relation toward one another into which portions of pure experience may enter." Thus far, it appears that he maintains the first of the four alternatives. However, he goes on to assert that, "the relation itself is a part of pure experience," which indicated that he maintains the second or third alternative. The passage continues with the claim that, "one of its 'terms' becomes the subject or bearer of the knowledge, the knower, the other becomes the object known." The passage is followed by a

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1James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 4.
footnote, in which it is asserted that "the knower" is "the passing thought." Consequently, it is also suggested that he maintains the fourth alternative since 'thought' would seem to be a synonym for 'consciousness.'

We ought to have some general term by which to designate all states of consciousness merely as such, and apart from their particular quality or cognitive function. . . . In this quandary we can make no definitive choice, but must, according to the convenience of the context, use sometimes one, sometimes another of the synonyms that have been mentioned. My own partiality is for either FEELING or THOUGHT. 2

Though it is not completely clear as to which of these positions James actually adopts, or even that he consistently adopts any one of them, his statements regarding the distinction between the mental and physical more often than not indicate that he favors the first. In the following discussion it will be assumed that this is the case and the concern will be with the problem of clarifying the position.

A further difficulty involved in stating James' position is that, though in the passage quoted above (with which this section begins) he in some way states the distinction between the mental and the physical in terms of a difference of relations, he does not consistently do so. Rather, he uses a confusing variety of expressions, for

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2James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 185-186.
example: "their way of behaving toward each other,"\textsuperscript{3} "function,"\textsuperscript{4} "context,"\textsuperscript{5} "processes,"\textsuperscript{6} "operations,"\textsuperscript{7} "transitions,"\textsuperscript{8} and "groups of associates."\textsuperscript{9} This difficulty is especially acute when it comes to James' theory of cognition. In his theory of perception the notion of consciousness as that of a relation comes to the foreground; with his view regarding conception, the notion of consciousness as being a function emerges the more clearly.\textsuperscript{10} In what has preceded it has been claimed that James' view is to the effect that pure experience 'becomes' mental and/or physical in virtue of the relations into which it enters. Since James most often states his view in such a way, i.e., in terms of relations, in what is to follow this interpretation will be retained and elaborated.

\textsuperscript{3} James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 154.
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., p. 12.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., p. 13.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., p. 80.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., p. 16.
\textsuperscript{10} The same observation is made by C. W. Morris, Six Theories of Mind (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), pp. 288-89.
A general historical comparison along with a simple conceptual analogy will assist in making a beginning. Stated in rather cursory terms, it might be said that the two conceptions of the mental and physical most prevalent in modern philosophy prior to that of James were, on the one hand, that stemming from Descartes and his influence on Locke and his empiricist successors and, on the other, that stemming from post-Kantian idealism. For convenience and brevity the former conception will here be referred to as Cartesian, and the latter, as Hegelian.

It can be said that according to the Cartesian conception the difference between the mental and physical is in a basic respect like that between male and female as it is perhaps most commonly conceived, viz., every person is either male or female but never both, and is so in virtue of an inherent characteristic or set of characteristics, the characteristic or characteristics in question being temperamental and/or anatomical, and so forth. Analogously, every entity is either mental or physical but never both, and is so in virtue of an inherent characteristic or set of characteristics, the characteristic or characteristics distinguishing the mental and the physical having to do, for example, with, 'thought' and 'extension' respectively (see above, Chapter I, Section III, i).
The Hegelian conception of the mental and physical is, on the other hand, comparable in an important respect to the common conceptions of husband and wife. 'Husband' and 'wife' are, at least primarily, relational terms, one is the husband (wife) of some other person, i.e., because one is related in a particular sort of way to another person, and they are correlative terms, i.e., one is a husband (wife) because he has a wife (husband). Analogously, in accord with the Hegelian conception, 'mental' and 'physical' are primarily relational and correlative terms. The mental is that which is related in some particular sort of way to the physical world (the relation being, roughly, that of its knowing the world), and the physical is that which is related in some (other) particular sort of way to some mind (the relation being, roughly, that of its being known by a mind). Thus:

By the word "consciousness" Hegel means a mental process, in so far as it stands over against and opposed to some sort of fact or object. He defines in general the problem of consciousness as the problem of determining its own relation to its object.  

\[ \text{Josiah Royce, Lectures on Modern Idealism (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1919), p. 156.} \]
ated: I have the certainty through the other, viz. through the actual fact; and this, again, exists in that certainty through an other, viz. through the I.12

Much as there can be no husbands without there also being wives, and conversely, there can be no minds without there being something other for them to know, and no physical world, without its being known. Accordingly:

For the thinkers I call neo-Kantian, the word consciousness to-day does no more than signalize the fact that experience is indefeasibly dualistic in structure. It means that not subject, not object, but object-plus-subject is the minimum that can actually be.13

To set up the subject as real independently of the whole, and to make the whole into experience in the sense of an adjective of that subject, seems to me indefensible. And when I contend that reality must be sentient, my conclusion almost consists in the denial of this fundamental error. For if, seeking for reality, we go to experience, what we certainly do not find is a subject or an object, or indeed any other thing whatever, standing separate and on its own bottom. What we discover rather is a whole in which distinctions can be made, but in which divisions do not exist.14

(This conceptual analogy is not intended to be exact.

For example, 'x is the husband (wife) of y' seems equivalent in meaning to 'x is the male (female) spouse of y,' yet 'male' and 'female' are, presumably, not themselves relational terms and 'x is the spouse of y' ex-


13James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 5.

14Bradley, Appearance and Reality, p. 128.
presses a relation that is symmetrical. However, 'x
cognizes y' and 'x is cognized by y' seem to express only
relations but relations that are asymmetrical. Further,
though 'x is the husband (wife) of y' would seem to ex-
press an external relation, the essential relation between
the mental and physical according to the Hegelian concep-
tion is one that is internal, the mental and the physical
being conceived as in some sense 'aspects' of a single
reality.)

It is perhaps worth arguing briefly that a world
can be imagined in which the notions of male and female
would be comparable to those of the mental and the physi-
cal—according to the Hegelian conception of the latter
notions. Such a world might be one in which everyone is
married to someone of the opposite sex, one in which
there are no bachelors, widows, and so forth. Hence, it
is to be supposed that everyone is mated at birth and no
one allowed to outlive his mate, and so on. It is con-
ceivable, if not also probable, that in such a world the
notions of male and female would have become assimilated,
respectively, to those of husband and wife. Accordingly,
the notion of male would be that of one who has a wife
and that of female, that of one who has a husband, i.e.,
one's sex would be determined in accord with one's rela-
tion to someone else. In this hypothetical world one is
so identified with one's matrimonial role that rather than
'x is the husband (wife) of y' meaning 'x is the male (female) spouse of y,' it means something like 'x financially supports (is financially supported by) y.' (Compare the common phrases 'homemaker' and 'breadwinner.')

The point to be made here is simply that if one assumes the viewpoint of idealism, viz., that nothing exists outside some cognitive relationship, one can readily conceive the mental and physical solely in terms of this relation.

iv

James' manner of conceiving the mental and physical is somewhat comparable to the notions of father and mother. 'Father' and 'mother' are relational but not correlative terms, i.e., one is a father (mother) because one is related in a particular sort of way to someone else (the child) and someone other than the mother (father) (of the child). Analogously, an entity (i.e., a portion of pure experience) is mental (physical) because it is related in a particular sort of way to some other entity or entities, an entity or entities other than those constituting the physical world (a mind). In contrast to the Hegelian conception, according to which an entity is mental or physical depending upon its position in a single sort of asymmetrical relation (roughly, depending upon whether the entity is the term 'x' or the term 'y' in the relation expressed by 'x knows y'), according to James'
view, corresponding to the mental and physical are two
different kinds of relations. Analogously, to be a
father is to be a term in one sort of relation (viz., the
father-child relation), to be a mother is to be a term
in another sort of relation (viz., the mother-child rela-
tion). Thus James states, for example:

On the principles which I am defending, a 'mind'
or 'personal consciousness' is the name for a
series of experiences run together by certain de-
finite transitions, and an objective reality is a
series of similar experiences knit by different
transitions.\(^{15}\)

In the paragraph which immediately precedes that from
which the first quotation given in this section is drawn
James identifies "consciousness" with the relation (or
the "function") of knowing. He asserts regarding "con-
sciousness" that:

I mean ... to insist most emphatically that it
does stand for a function ... there is a function
in experience which thoughts perform, and for the
performance of which this quality of being is in-
voked. That function is knowing.\(^{16}\)

Thus since "knowing" is "a particular sort of relation
towards one another into which portions of pure experi-
ence may enter,"\(^ {17}\) to be conscious or mental is to be a
term in the relation expressed by 'x knows y.' The
entity which is the term 'x' and that which is 'y' in

\(^{15}\)James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 80.
\(^{16}\)Ibid., pp. 3-4.
\(^{17}\)Ibid., p. 4.
the relation expressed by 'x knows y' are both mental and in virtue of being a (i.e., any) term in that sort of relation. (In this respect the notions of father and mother and James' conception of the mental and physical are not analogous. The relation expressed by 'x is the father of y' is asymmetrical, and presumably, so is the relation expressed by 'x knows y.' But only the term 'x' is to be designated as 'the father' in the former relation, yet in the latter relation, both 'x' and 'y' are mental in character. Further, in 'x is the father of y,' 'x' and 'y' denote persons, whereas, in 'x knows y,' only 'x' need denote some person. But these two relations are given a different conceptual frame of reference here. Common to 'x' and 'y' in the former is the category of 'person,' and in the latter, that of 'pure experience,' i.e., in the latter, 'x' and 'y' both denote instances of pure experience.) Thus a physical object as an object of or for consciousness is mental because it is situated as a term in the relation expressed by 'x knows y' (or, 'y is an object of consciousness for x') and is also physical because it is simultaneously situated as a term in an entirely different sort of relation.

Stated in other terms: in contrast to the Hegelian conception, according to which the mental and physical are related as terms in a direct and dyadic relation, according
to James, the relation between the mental and physical is either that of identity or else rather indirect. Thus (in the case of knowing "by acquaintance" at least—the nature of conceptual knowledge will be discussed later) the entity known and some portion of the physical world are numerically identical, whereas other portions of the physical world are related to the knowing mind only in so far as they are related in other ways to that portion which is presently known by it. Utilizing the comparison with the notions of father and mother, it might be said that somewhat as a father and mother are related, as such, only through the child or children of which they are both the parents, according to James' view, a mind and the physical world are related only through the entity or entities which they both 'share' in virtue of its being a common term in two sorts of relations. Thus a father (mother) is related to the mother (father), in virtue of the relation expressed by 'x is the father (mother) of the child y of z'; and analogously, a mind and the physical world are related as the terms 'x' and 'z' in such an expression as 'x knows y which has the relation R to z.' (The analogy between the common notions of father and mother and James' notions of the mental and physical is of course far from exact. Perhaps the basic inadequacy of the analogy lies in the consideration that the notions
of father and mother have a non-relational component, viz.,
the former means something like 'male parent,' and the
latter, 'female parent.' Hence, one cannot be a father—
regardless of the nature of the relationship involved—
unless one is male, and thus, one cannot be both a father
and a mother, and so forth.)

Section II

In the foregoing discussion the attempt has been
made to indicate something about the general character
of the relations in virtue of which a portion of pure
experience assumes a mental and/or physical nature. But
thus far only some of the formal characteristics of these
relations have been discussed, and more importantly, those
respective characteristics which distinguish these as two
sorts of relations (i.e., those, on the one hand, in
virtue of which a portion of pure experience is related
to a mind, and those, on the other, in virtue of which it
is related to the physical world) have yet to be indicated.

Some of what has preceeded impinges directly on
this problem; for example, spatial relations have pre­
viously been identified and discussed as being among those
relations in virtue of being a term in which a portion of
pure experience is physical in nature (see above, Chapter
I, Section III). Accordingly, James states that, "If we
take space-relations, they fail to connect minds into any regular system." What other kinds of relations belong to this group (viz., that consisting of all those relations the terms of which are physical entities and are such in virtue of the relation, and what features can be discerned as common to the relations comprising it? The following passage from James bears on this question:

Why, for example, do we call a fire hot, and water wet, and yet refuse to say that our mental state, when it is 'of' these objects, is either wet or hot? 'Intentionally,' at any rate, and when the mental state is a vivid image, hotness and wetness are in it just as much as they are in the physical experience. The reason is this, that, as the general chaos of all our experiences gets sifted, we find that there are some fires that will always burn sticks and always warm our bodies, and that there are some waters that will always put out fires; while there are other fires and waters that will not act at all. The general group of experiences that act, that do not only possess their natures intrinsically, but wear them adjectively and energetically, turning them against one another, comes inevitably to be contrasted with the group whose members, having identically the same natures, fail to manifest them in the 'energetic' way.

It might appear that James is here only reiterating or reinstating the criteria in terms of which earlier empiricists most often attempted to distinguish the experience of physical reality from the merely 'mental.' Compare, for example, the following passage from Berkeley's

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18 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 46.
19 Ibid., pp. 31-32
writings:

But, whatever power I may have over my own thoughts, I find the ideas actually perceived by Sense have not a like dependence on my will. When in broad daylight I open my eyes, it is not in my power to choose whether I shall see or no, or to determine what particular objects shall present themselves to my view; and so likewise as to the hearing and other senses; the ideas imprinted on them are not creatures of my will. . . . The ideas of Sense are more strong, lively, and distinct than those of the imagination; they have likewise a steadiness, order, and coherence, and are not excited at random, as those which are the effects of human wills often are, but in a regular train or series. . . . The ideas imprinted on the Senses by the Author of nature are called real things; and those excited in the imagination being less regular, vivid, and constant, are more properly termed ideas, or images of things, which they copy and represent. 20

In this passage Berkeley proposes what can be distinguished in a general way as three different kinds of criteria, viz., one regarding a relation between a (finite) mind and "real things," a second with regard to an inherent character of "real things," and a third with regard to a relation between or among "real things." But it is not open to James to distinguish physical realities as being those that "are not creatures of my will," for no relation between physical realities is thereby implied (but rather, some lack of relation between a mind and certain physical realities). Moreover, the notion of a mental or volitional agent which this way of making the distinction seems to introduce is not one to which James is amenable; for he

20 Berkeley, A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge, pp. 45-47.
submits, for example, that:

\[ \ldots \text{there is no direct evidence that we feel}\]
\[ \ldots \text{the activity of an inner spiritual agent as such}. \ldots^{21}\]

\[ \ldots \text{the only 'free will' I have ever thought}\]
\[ \ldots \text{of defending is the character of novelty in fresh activity-situations}.^{22}\]

Neither is it available to James to distinguish physical realities by affirming that they "are more strong, lively, and distinct," for again no relation between physical realities is thereby implied, but rather, an intrinsic character. And that physical realities have such an inherent character lacking to a mere mental state is apparently denied above by James' claim that:

\[ \ldots \text{when the mental state is a vivid image,}\]
\[ \ldots \text{hotness and wetness are in it just as much as they are in the physical experience}.^{23}\]

The criterion invoked with the consideration that the experience of physical realities has "a steadiness, order, and coherence" not present in the make-up of the mental, that physical realities "are not excited at random ... but in a regular train or series" appears more promising, for such a criterion pertains to the relation(s) between these physical realities. However, the distinction between the mental and physical orders—if

\[^{21}\text{James, } \textit{Essays in Radical Empiricism}, \text{ p. 169.}\]
\[^{22}\text{Ibid., } \text{p. 185.}\]
\[^{23}\text{Ibid., } \text{pp. 31-32.}\]
made in this way—amounts to one in terms of whether a
certain relation(s) is present or absent—rather than,
in terms of the presence of one sort of relation(s) or
that of some other sort of relation(s). James cannot
rest content with distinguishing mental entities as those
that are "excited at random" and in no "regular train or
series" for such entities (according to James) are mental
in virtue of some particular sort of relation, rather
than, lack of relation, in which they stand to one another.
That is to say, it is not open to James to define 'the
mental' in terms of certain relations which, as mental
rather than physical, an entity lacks, for this renders
the mental indistinguishable from pure experience, which
is not physical—but also, not mental. In short, James' neutral monism implies a revision of the traditional
empiricist solution of the problem.

ii

James attributes a particular kind of "steadiness,
order, and coherence" to our experience of physical
realities. Physical realities "act" and are "energetic."
He asserts of a physical reality that "it is 'strong,' its acts 'energetically' and aggressively."
Borrowing a frequent phrase of James', physical realities

\footnote{Ibid., see, for example, p. 31 ff., p. 124 ff.,
and p. 139 ff.}
have 'practical consequences,' for 'with 'real' objects, on the contrary, consequences always accrue.' Accordingly, it is James' position that physical entities do not differ from those that are mental in virtue of their qualities (i.e., "intrinsically") but in virtue of their external relations (i.e., "adjectively") and that these relations (those distinctive of physical entities) are operative, dynamic, or "energetic." (See above, Chapter I, Section III, ii, where it is argued that James' approach to differentiating between mental and physical entities involves three claims, viz.: that a distinction can be drawn between an entity's qualities and its relations [be it mental or physical]; that with regard to their qualities mental and physical entities [as such] do not differ; and that wherein they do differ it is due to a difference of relations [in which they appear as terms].)

Utilizing one of James' examples\(^\text{25}\) his position might be sketched in the following way: There is a sense in which 'hot' or 'hotness' is a quality--and thus not the exclusive possession of physical things--and another sense in which it is a relation--and one obtaining exclusively among physical things. In the one sense, 'hot' is 'how it feels,' felt as an immediate, and simple datum: immediate, because it has at least something of the

\(^{25}\text{Ibid.}, see, for example, pp. 31-32.\)
titillation, the tang, of sensation, i.e., it is what something 'feels like,' as opposed to how it might be represented by means of symbols, associations, and so forth; and simple, because it is not also how a thing feels in other respects (what other qualities 'hot things' may have) or how something behaves (in what ways and with what other qualities 'hot things' may interact). In the other sense, 'hot' is 'what it does,' i.e., its active affinities with other qualities, the processes in which it participates, its relations productive of consequences.\(^{26}\)

According to James, what 'hot' 'feels like' can be known only by "acquaintance:" "I know the color blue when I see it, and the flavor of a pear when I taste it; . . . I cannot impart acquaintance with them to any one who has not already made it himself."\(^{27}\) But concerning 'what it does' or 'how it behaves' one can have "knowledge-about," for: "Knowledge about a thing is knowledge of its relations."\(^{28}\) Knowing what 'hot' 'feels like' can be imparted only by acquaintance because 'hot' in this sense is a quality and one which is the same quality whether it occurs as belonging to a physical fact or a mental state. In

\(^{26}\)This distinction is perhaps similar to that of Whitehead's between 'presentational immediacy' and 'causal efficacy.' (See, for example, Process and Reality, page 255 ff.

\(^{27}\)James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 221.

\(^{28}\)Ibid., p. 259.
other words, to know what 'hot' is in this sense is to recall or recapture something of how it feels, in effect, to feel it once again. (It is a common objection to this kind of claim that the 'thought of' (memory of, and so forth) a pain is not itself painful. But where the thought does not itself have the experienced quality, it is not of the quality per se but of its relations, i.e., "knowledge-about" is what is involved. Thus in recalling the discomfort of the dentist's drill, the thought may be of (or more accurately, simply 'be') the pain as that piercing, rasping feeling as then and there occurred, or else, it may be of the pain as that which then and there occurred (or thought of in some other connection or circumstance).

It was argued above (see Chapter II, Section I, viii) that pure experience known merely as such is known by "acquaintance"; thus the content of "acquaintance" consists of qualities common to physical facts and mental states for as such it is neither mental nor physical. On the other hand, "knowledge-about" can be imparted by discourse and description, for it is primarily conceptual. James' view of conception will be discussed at length later, but at this juncture it can be tentatively concluded that, according to James, our knowledge of the relations among physical entities, for example, of the ways in which
they behave toward one another, is not a mental represen-
tation of those relations, (the same sort of relations, but with a different locus, viz., a mind) but their repre-
sentation by those of other sorts. Further, James' view here is complicated by his claim that relations among physical entities are experienced, as well as conceived or represented. Thus, 'what hot feels like' as either presented to the senses or represented by the mind is the same quality; 'what hot does' is presented to the senses as a certain sort of relation and represented by the mind by means of a relation of a different sort.

iii

By way of an appendage to the foregoing discussion and an anticipation of the chapter to follow regarding James' pragmatism, it is to be noted that the two ways of construing a predicate like 'hot,' viz., as 'how it feels' and according to 'what it does,' insinuate two general approaches to rendering the meaning of a descriptive term, and by extension, the meaning of a proposition, viz., identifying or correlating its meaning with the experienced quality, object, or state of affairs that the linguistic expression 'stands for,' and identifying or correlating its meaning with the experienced consequences that follow upon or flow from the quality, object, or state of affairs that the linguistic expression 'stands
for.' In the latter approach James' pragmatic method and theory of meaning is dimly discernable. Additionally, if James in some sense maintains that part of the meaning of, for example, 'This fire is hot,' is, 'This fire is real (as opposed to recalled, imagined, hallucinated, and so forth'), he seems committed to maintain further that the latter of the two approaches is necessarily involved in rendering its meaning (to be rendered by some such expression as, 'This fire burns sticks'), for (as argued above) it is in virtue of its efficacy or effects in the physical world that an entity is part of that world.

Something like the following notion of verification is thus suggested: in verifying a proposition the experiential consequences of the presence of some supposed quality (or qualities) is sought after. If experiential consequences occur (wood being consumed, or fire being extinguished, and so forth) they confirm that the supposed quality (or qualities) is real or veridical—and because these experiential consequences consist in "energetic" relations, which relations are such that their terms are part of the physical world. In other words, direct experience places us in immediate touch with physical reality, and therefore, the clarification and verification of (true) propositions does so as well.

To recur briefly to the example of a mirage utilized above (see Chapter I, Section III, ii), it is
something about 'the way it behaves' which reveals the mirage for what it is. It is the experiential consequences which follow upon its initial experience, i.e., the relations experienced between consecutive appearances of the mirage that confute the supposition that it is a genuine pool of water. If, on the other hand, this determination could be made according to 'how it feels,' i.e., by a scrutiny of the qualities of a single portion of experience, no 'test' or verification would be called for. Hence, to answer the question, 'Is this a real pool of water in the road ahead?' one must also ask: "What sensible difference . . . will its truth make?" 29

iv

Such a conception of the mental and physical orders and the approach to the problem of meaning and truth it intimates does not, as it may appear, preclude a place for human action and effects—which (as will be later argued) have a central position in James' pragmatism. In the passage from Berkeley quoted above it was claimed that I have "power . . . over my own thoughts" but that "the ideas imprinted on them [the senses] are not creatures of my will." Other empiricists prior to James state much the same view as that expressed by Berkeley. Locke, for example, does so, and in much the same words as does

29 James, Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 60.
Berkeley:

I cannot avoid the having those ideas [from the senses] produced in my mind. For though, when my eyes are shut, or windows fast, I can at pleasure recall to my mind the ideas of light, or the sun, which former sensations had lodged in my memory; so I can at pleasure lay by that idea, and take into my view that of the smell of a rose, or taste of sugar. But, if I turn my eyes at noon towards the sun, I cannot avoid the ideas which the light or sun then produces in me.30

Expressed in quite general terms, the view is that one is active with respect to what is merely mental, i.e., within the domain of one's own subjective life, but passive with regard to what is also physical, i.e., the particular character of one's experience of the physical world. James, in a sense, turns the tables: it is with regard to our subjective states that we are passive, and for the reason that they give us nothing to press against, nothing that conveys effort or consummates intent. Mere mental states, i.e., what is of our creation and caprice, what we merely conceive, imagine, or fancy, are as so many levers, handles, and ropes which are attached to nothing. Accordingly, James states:

I make for myself now an experience of blazing fire; I place it near my body; but it does not warm me in the least. I lay a stick upon it, and the stick either burns or remains green, as I please. I call up water, and pour it on the fire, and absolutely no difference ensues.31


31James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 32.
It is only as we make connection between our thoughts and the physical world—by availing ourselves of the connections which that world provides as disclosed in sense-experience—that we become genuinely active. In other words, I can act, by acting with physical realities, i.e., in the physical world, so as to help bring about definite experienced effects (rather than any, or no, effects), i.e., the "energetic" character of physical realities is instanced by 'If I place sticks in a fire, the fire will burn them,' as well as, 'Fire burns sticks.' (The sense of 'active' attributed to James here is essentially that of the term as used to characterize those "active" or "energetic" relations between physical entities, viz., productive of experiencable consequences.)

Granted, as Locke states in the quotation above: "But, if I turn my eyes at noon toward the sun, I cannot avoid the ideas which the light or sun produces in me"; yet to infer from this that I am passive with respect to my experience of physical reality is the result of abstracting a single element from the whole. It is I that "turn my eyes at noon toward the sun" and thereby realize a certain sort of experience; the situation as a whole is one in which I am active. Thus, in a sense, James' adversary is again atomistic empiricism (see above, Chapter I, Section II). With regard to the 'simple' data
of experience, or pure experience, we are in a sense not active—but because the question of activity or passibility does not arise. The 'how it feels' character of experience simply comes and is, i.e., it is 'given' but not imposed or impressed. Once one abandons a causal theory of perception which James does (see above, Chapter I, Section IV), there remains no coercive reason for claiming either that the perceiver is passive or that he is active with respect to sensation as such. Locke argues from the 'givenness' of sensation to our 'passivity' only by confusing its own (felt) character with a (causal) theory about it.

The active or "energetic" character of certain 'simple' data is external to them, i.e., has to do with their (external) relations to other things. Likewise, our activity with respect to these 'simple' data resides in certain relations between them (our activity here being motor or muscular in nature). (The claims that we are active in the physical world and that it is the 'active' character of relations there that constitutes that world—of course, involve difficulties, but—are not conspicuously inconsistent. Our motor activity in the physical world is again a matter of relations among physical entities, viz., physical entities such as my hands and manipulatable objects.)
To the extent that James succeeds in ascertaining relations of some sort obtaining only among physical entities, i.e., some sort of relations among portions of pure experience the terms of which are always physical entities, a negative characterization of the sort of relations among mental entities is also derived. However, as previously stated, more than a negative characterization is necessary.

Although the keystone of James' neutral monism, viz., his concept of pure experience, is not put into place until the appearance of his late essays (i.e., those written beginning about 1905), what was perhaps the most difficult stone to lay was quarried from his intensive examination of consciousness to be found in the earlier *Principles of Psychology*—viz., a conception of relations 'within consciousness,' i.e., of relations of a kind that obtain among conscious states as such. 32 What is, for James at least, the most significant of these relations is "the co-conscious transition" 33 discussed extensively in the chapter entitled "The Stream of Thought." As this material has been considered at length in an earlier

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33 James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, p. 47.
section of the present paper, its discussion to follow will be brief (see above, Chapter I, Section II).

According to James, "the relation experienced between terms that form states of mind" is introspectively discoverable and conceptually distinguishable from those relations between physical facts in that entities as terms in the former relations "are immediately conscious of continuing each other." For:

The organization of the Self as a system of memories, purposes, strivings, fulfillments or disappointments, is incidental to this most intimate of all relations, the terms of which seem in many cases actually to compenetrate and suffuse each other's being.

A general understanding of James' position can be gained by briefly considering a single example. The most salient relation between a stroke of lightening and the clap of thunder which usually follows it (i.e., as physical entities) is that expressed in a crude way by 'lightening produces thunder.' Here we have what James terms an "energetic" character of lightening, an "energetic" relation between lightening and thunder and in virtue of which they are physical entities. On the other hand, as a mental entity, a thunder clap is something more like "thunder-
breaking-upon-silence-and-contrasting-with-it." The thunder clap has its physical affinities, for example, with the lightening stroke that produced it, and on the other hand, its mental, felt affinities with such things as the experience which immediately preceded it in the stream of thought. In other words, the distinction between the thunder clap as a physical event and as a mental state is not for James one between a sensation of sound 'in the head' and 'sound' waves in the environing air, but something like that between 'what a lightening stroke produced' and 'what qualitatively contrasts with the silence that preceded.' The latter sort of relation has according to James, a continuity which the former does not. In the stream of thought the interval between lightening stroke and thunder clap is filled in or smoothed out, so to speak; or one might say, the section of the stream has a hyphenated character, as it were, making for a continuous transition from lightening stroke to thunder clap.

Given James' view, it is not surprising, for example, that when Hume sought a "necessary connection" between a physical event and its cause he could find it only in an "impression of reflection." For in James'

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39 Ibid.
view, continuous relations (as opposed to correlations, concatenations, and other less intimate sorts of relations) are among those by virtue of being terms in which entities are mental rather than physical. (James might well wish to 'dissolve' the traditional dispute over the nature of physical causation by pointing out that 'real' or 'necessary' (i.e., continuous) relations characteristically obtain between conscious states, whereas, causal (i.e., "energetic") relations characteristically obtain between physical events—and thus that the philosophical quest for a 'real' connection between physical events and their causes and effects is founded on a confusion with regard to two fundamentally different kinds of relations.)

vi

Another feature of the stream of thought recognized by James and which he apparently conceives as being of the nature of a relation is "feelings of tendency." He states the following:

Now what I contend for, and accumulate examples to show, is that 'tendencies' are not only descriptions from without, but that they are among the objects of the stream, which is thus aware of them from within, and must be described as in very large measure constituted of feelings of tendency, often so vague that we are unable to name them at all.40

Of some significance for the later discussion of his

pragmatism and view of conception are "attitudes of expectancy, . . . a sense of the direction from which an impression is about to come, although no positive impression is yet there." Mental states, according to James, often function as "signs of direction," i.e., a mental state has a way of 'pointing to,' or 'tending to' others: "We all of us have this permanent consciousness of whither our thought is going."

When such a relation fulfills a cognitive function it might more appropriately be termed that of representation. Representation does not for James mean replication, i.e., mental states do not represent others by repeating or resembling them. Rather, they "are felt to increase or to enlarge their meaning, to carry out their purpose, or to bring us nearer to their goal."

James continues in this passage by stating that:

They 'represent' them, and may fulfill their function better than they fulfilled it themselves. But to 'fulfill a function' in a world of pure experience can be conceived and defined in only one possible way. In such a world transitions and arrivals (or terminations) are the only events that happen, though they happen by so many sorts of path. The only function that one experience can perform is to lead into another experi-

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41 Ibid., p. 251.
42 Ibid., p. 253.
43 Ibid., p. 255.
44 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 62.
ence; and the only fulfillment we can speak of is the reaching of a certain experienced end. Thus one mental state may represent another in that it "leads to" that other, whether or not it in any way resembles or 'copies' it. It is essentially in this way that James regards a mental state as being representative of a physical reality, i.e., by 'leading to' a mental state—which is at the same time numerically identical with that physical fact. That is, the 'physical fact' is a portion of pure experience which is simultaneously a term in two different sorts of relations, in virtue of being a term in one of which it is a mental state and in virtue of being a term in the other it is a physical fact. Because it 'leads to' that physical fact it can be regarded as standing-in for it or being its equivalent in various mental schemes or operations.

Further, this relation of 'leading to' can serve as a representative of, or substitute for, relations between physical entities. The passage quoted from immediately above continues as follows:

When one experience leads to (or can lead to) the same end as another, they agree in function. But the whole system of experiences as they are immediately given presents itself as a quasi-chaos through which one can pass out of an initial term in many directions and yet end in the same terminus, moving from next to next by a great many possible paths.

Ibid., pp. 62-63.
Either one of these paths might be a functional substitute for another, and to follow one rather than another might on occasion be an advantageous thing to do. As a matter of fact, and in a general way, the paths that run through conceptual experiences, that is, through 'thoughts' or 'ideas' that 'know' the things in which they terminate, are highly advantageous paths to follow.46

Thus the relation in thought between 'fire' and 'burning sticks' is not a causal one (or at least in anything like the same sense) nor does it somehow 'copy' such a causal relation (if indeed there is even anything there to 'copy') but it serves to represent it by 'leading to' the flaming sticks by providing a rule or recipe for producing that effect whenever desired.

It seems safe to claim (as James seems committed to claim) that the representing relation is a relation obtaining only among mental entities. (Where a physical fact is represented, it is a mental state in virtue of being represented and a physical fact in virtue of also being a term in a relation or relations of a different kind.) One physical entity can represent another in the sense of resembling it or copying it, but one physical entity cannot of itself in any intelligible sense be said to be substitute or equivalent for some other. An aerial photograph will resemble a certain area of terrain and be a photographic 'copy' of it. But what can it mean to say that it is a 'substitute' for those hills

46Ibid., pp. 63-64.
and valleys? Surely nothing at all unless what is meant is something like: one's study of the photograph is a substitute for actually traversing that terrain and seeing it first hand, i.e., it can 'lead to' some destination in that terrain just as can an actual acquaintance with the landscape.

Yet another relation which obtains exclusively among conscious states, or mental entities, is that which James designates 'appropriation.' As 'appropriation' was described above (see Chapter I, Section II, vi), it is one of those relations among individual conscious states in virtue of which an 'identical' or 'personal' consciousness is composed. James' view is of

. . . the continuous identity of each personal consciousness as a name for the practical fact that new experiences come which look back on the old ones, find them 'warm,' and greet and appropriate them as 'mine.'

In the context from which the immediately above quotation is drawn James considers the distinction between pure and conscious experience and states that pure experience "figures as a fact of 'conscious' life . . . only so far as 'appropriation' has occurred." He thus would

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47 Ibid., p. 129.
48 Ibid., p. 130.
appear to claim that the occurrence of the 'appropriation' of a portion of pure experience by some other is a necessary condition for its being conscious or mental. However, the view which will be adopted and argued in what follows is that 'appropriation' is a necessary condition for the unity of several thoughts, whereby they come to be 'thought together' as one thought, but is not a necessary condition either for a thought's being a thought (i.e., being a mental entity, rather than physical, or 'neutral') or for a thought's being part of the same mental history as others. Thus a distinction is to be drawn (and will be in the course of the following discussion) between: asserting that x is mental or part of some mind (rather than physical, or 'neutral' in nature), asserting that x, y, and z are part of the same mind or mental history, and asserting that x, y, and z are part of the same 'consciousness' or conscious (mental) state.

First of all, there is the question regarding the relation between assertions of the first two kinds: that as to whether or not James maintains that those relations in virtue of (being a term in) which a portion of pure experience is conscious or mental are also the same sorts of relations as those in virtue of which portions of pure experience participate in numerically the same mind or mental history. It would seem that James does maintain
that these relations are of the same kind. For example, in a passage discussed above (see Chapter II, Section I, vii, and Section III, i) he claims that "the room-experience" is a mental state in virtue of being part of "the reader's personal biography," i.e., the same mental history. Further, one of the "five characters of thought," according to James, is that "every thought tends to be part of a personal consciousness."\(^{49}\) That is to say: "It seems as if the elementary psychic fact were not thought or this thought or that thought, but my thought, every thought being owned."\(^{50}\) Thus a portion of pure experience is a "psychic fact" (as opposed to a 'pure' or, on the other hand, a 'physical' fact) in virtue of being "part of a personal consciousness." In other words, the problem of the nature of the conscious or mental is for James essentially that of the nature of the relations in virtue of being a term in which an entity is part of a personal history.

Accordingly, those relations constituting the continuity of the stream of thought discussed above (see Section II, v and vi, of this chapter) contribute to its identity. Thus James claims that:

\[\ldots\] the distant selves appear to our thought as

\(^{49}\)James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 225.

\(^{50}\)Ibid., p. 226.
having for hours of time been continuous with each other, and the most recent ones of them continuous with the Self of the present moment, melting into it by slow degrees; . . . The sense of our own personal identity, then, is . . . grounded either on the resemblance in a fundamental respect, or on the continuity before the mind, of the phenomena compared.51

Resemblance among the parts of a continuum of feelings . . . constitutes the real and verifiable 'personal identity' which we feel.52

This continuity is both temporal and qualitative in kind:

The proposition that within each personal consciousness thought feels continuous, means two things:

1. That even where there is a time-gap the consciousness after it feels as if it belonged together with the consciousness before it, as another part of the same self;

2. That the changes from one moment to another in the quality of the consciousness are never absolutely abrupt.53

Continuity makes us unite what dissimilarity might otherwise separate; similarity makes us unite what discontinuity might hold apart.54

Also, there is "a warmth and intimacy":

Each thought, out of a multitude of other thoughts of which it may think, is able to distinguish those which belong to its own Ego from those which do not. The former have a warmth and intimacy about them of which the latter are completely devoid, being merely conceived, in a cold and foreign fashion, and not appearing as blood-relatives, bringing their greetings to us from out

51Ibid., p. 334.
52Ibid., p. 336.
53Ibid., p. 237.
54Ibid., p. 334.
Thus James claims that a single mental history is a plurality of passing thoughts rather than a substantial or transcendental unity, yet these thoughts connect temporally and qualitatively one with another in a continuous manner:

The unity of the parts of the stream is just as 'real' a connection as their diversity is a real separation; both connection and separation are ways in which the past thoughts appear to the present Thought;— unlike each other in respect of date and certain qualities— this is the separation; alike in other qualities, and continuous in time— this is the connection.56

However, that the successive thoughts composing a single stream of thought are related in various and intimate ways such that they compose a single mental history is not, according to James, sufficient to constitute a unitary self. He claims that:

For common-sense insists that the unity of all the selves is not a mere appearance of similarity or continuity, ascertained after the fact. She is sure that it involves a real belonging to a real Owner, to a pure spiritual entity of some kind. Relation to this entity is what makes the self's constituents stick together as they do for thought. . . . common-sense insists, there must be a real proprietor in the case of the selves, or else their actual accretion into a 'personal consciousness' would never have taken place.57

James accepts this "common sense" view, but bestows

55 Ibid., p. 331.
56 Ibid., p. 353.
57 Ibid., p. 337.
the role of the "pure spiritual entity" or "Arch-Ego, dominating the entire stream of thought and all the selves that may be represented in it" on "the present Thought":

There must be an agent of the appropriating and disowning; but that agent we have already named. It is the Thought to whom the various 'constituents' are known. That Thought is a vehicle of choice as well as of cognition; and among the choices it makes are these appropriations, or repudiations, of its 'own.'

In having "the present Thought" serve the function which might otherwise be assigned to some substantial or transcendental self, viz., that of being 'the owner' of all the preceding thoughts occurring in a stream of thought, James remains true to his radical empiricism. "The present Thought" is of course part of the stream of thought and not something lying beneath or beyond it, as it were:

The passing Thought then seems to be the Thinker; and though there may be another non-phenomenal Thinker behind that, so far we do not seem to need him to express the facts.

In stating the view he asserts that:

... the real, present onlooking, remembering, 'judging thought' or identifying 'section' of the stream ... collects, -- 'owns' some of the past facts which it surveys, and disowns the rest, -- and so makes a unity. ..." 
That is to say, whatever activity—in the way of remembering, judging, and so forth—is to be attributed to consciousness is a constituent of the individual stream of thought and compatible with its diversity.

But in supposing that the thoughts composing the stream must be unified by being 'owned' by some 'thinker' and also that 'the thinker' which 'owns' them is "the present Thought," James poses the problem of how a single pulse of thought—"the present Thought" being one thought among others in the total stream—can come to include other thoughts, to be a consciousness inclusive of these thoughts, i.e., how it can make a unity of these. Regarding this difficulty James states that:

To the usual empiricist explanation of personal consciousness this is a formidable reproof, because all the individual thoughts and feelings which have succeeded each other 'up to date' are represented by ordinary Associationism as in some inscrutable way 'integrating' or gumming themselves together on their own account, and thus fusing into a stream. All the incomprehensibilities which in Chapter VI we say to attach to the idea of things fusing without a medium apply to the empiricist description of personal identity.62

This problem was discussed in a general way above (see Chapter I, Section II, ii) but a fuller account of it is appropriate here:

Do not talk, therefore, I said, of the higher states consisting of the simpler, or being the same with them; talk rather of their knowing the

62Ibid.
same things. They are different mental facts, but
they apprehend, each in its own peculiar way, the
same objective A, B, C, and D.

The theory of combination, I was forced to con­
clude, is thus untenable, being both logically
nonsensical and practically unnecessary. Say
what you will, twelve thoughts, each of a single
word, are not the self-same mental thing as one
thought of the whole sentence. The higher
thoughts, I insisted, are psychic units, not
compounds; but for all that, they may know to­
gether as a collective multitude the very same
objects which under other conditions are known
separately by as many simple thoughts.63

The problem is at least much akin to that of Kant

regarding a 'unity of apperception':

Consciousness of self according to the determina­
tions of our state in inner perception is merely
empirical, and always changing. No fixed and
abiding self can present itself in this flux of
inner appearances. Such consciousness is usually
named inner sense, or empirical apperception.
What has necessarily to be represented as numerically
identical cannot be thought as such through empiri­
data. To render such a transcendental presup­
position valid, there must be a condition which
precedes all experience, and which makes experi­
ence itself possible.

There can be in us no modes of knowledge, no
connection or unity of one mode of knowledge
with another, without that unity of conscious­
ness which precedes all data of intuitions, and
by relation to which representation of objects is
alone possible. This pure original unchangeable
consciousness I shall name transcendental apper­
ception.64

An alternative way of making James' point here

63 James, A Pluralistic Universe, p. 189.

64 Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Trans­
lated by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's
(viz., "... twelve thoughts, each of a single word, are not the self-same mental thing as one thought of the whole sentence") might be in terms of what he calls "The Psychologist's Fallacy":

The great snare of the psychologist is the confusion of his own standpoint with that of the mental fact about which he is making his report. [. . .] A variety of the psychologist fallacy is the assumption that the mental state studied must be conscious of itself as the psychologist is conscious of it. The mental state is aware of itself only from within; it grasps what we call its own content, and nothing more. The psychologist, on the contrary, is aware of it from without, and knows its relations with all sorts of other things. What the thought sees is only its own object; what the psychologist sees is the thought's object, plus the thought itself, plus possibly all the rest of the world. 65

Viewing consciousness from without and at a distance, as it were, the multiplicity of successive thoughts composing a stream of thought form a sort of history or biography. Here we have a succession of thoughts, one passing into the other in a continuous manner. But: "the mental state is aware of itself only from within; it grasps what we call its own content, and nothing more."

The analogy utilized in the earlier discussion of 'appropriation' (see above, Chapter I, Section II, vi) may be helpful here. As was there argued, there is a continuity between the scenes at the successive 'overlooks' whereby they together form a series linked by continuous

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65 James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 196-197.
transitions. But in terms of that analogy consciousness consists at any given moment of a single scene (and not the whole series with its continuity), i.e., it is only what is included in that scene which can be felt by it. But, as was described in the above discussion, each of the scenes 'includes' the immediately preceding one, which in turn and in like manner, 'includes' its predecessor, and so on. Analogously, "the present Thought" 'appropriates,' 'owns' or 'includes' its predecessor. Thus here we do not have "things fusing without a medium"--"the medium is fully assigned, . . . in the shape of something not among the things collected, but superior to them all, namely, the real, present onlooking, remembering, 'judging thought' or identifying 'section' of the stream."66

viii

There are two especially problematical points regarding the above interpretation of 'appropriation.' First of all, James suggests that no thought is conscious of itself, but only of its predecessor. James states, for example, that:

The present moment of consciousness is thus, as Mr. Hodgson, says, the darkest in the whole series. It may feel its own immediate existence--we have all along admitted the possibility of this, hard as it is by direct introspection to ascertain the fact--but nothing can be known about it till it be

66Ibid., p. 338.
Thus, since "the present Thought" 'knows' its predecessor only in virtue of 'appropriating' it, 'appropriation' is necessary to consciousness or mentality of any sort (for without it, no thought would ever be 'known').

Secondly, many of James' statements suggest that the continuity attributed above to a mental history is itself constituted by 'appropriation.' The view adopted here, however, is that it is antecedent to 'appropriation,' yet not of itself sufficient to make a unity of consciousness. Regarding James' analogy of the herd of cattle (see above, quotation on pages 45 and 46) it is unclear as to whether or not each successive owner of the herd inherits the cattle branded, or upon inheriting them brands them anew ("the 'brand' symbolizes the characters of warmth and continuity"). However, the former seems the more obvious interpretation. It is because the cattle already bear the brand that the new owner knows they are his ("each brand, so far is the mark, or cause, of our knowing that certain things (thoughts) belong together"), but it is only by 'appropriating' them that they become his in the sense that the unity of consciousness requires.

There are two points concerning the above discus-
sion which might be made regarding James' neutral monism. First, it seems odd to identify "the passing Thought" rather than the entire stream of thought as "the Thinker" as does James, and thus endow it with mental functions such as remembering and judging. Nonetheless, James' neutral monism appears to require this of him. "Knowing" has by James been asserted to be "a particular sort of relation towards one another into which portions of pure experience may enter"; and by entering into a relation of such kind a portion of pure experience becomes part of a mind or consciousness (though it may in the same instance also be part of the physical world): thus in knowing (by acquaintance) a piece of paper, for example, there is "an all round embracing of the paper by thought," i.e., "the paper is in the mind." Thus it must be possible to distinguish within the stream of thought between the terms of such a relation; and as "one of its [the relation's] terms becomes the subject or bearer of knowledge, the knower, the other becomes the object known," "the passing Thought" must assume the role of "the knower" ("the object known," that of (an) other (past) thought(s) which, as "the knower," "the passing thought" knows).

69 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 4.
70 James, The Meaning of Truth, p. 49.
71 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 4.
Thus in a sense the dichotomy between the knowing mind and a physical world which it knows that James seeks to overcome, and through a neutral monist position, is perhaps eliminated but only to reemerge within consciousness in the form of one between the knowing thought and (an) other thought(s) which it knows. (In other words, much as an epistemological dualist is constrained by his position to make claims regarding the mind which seem true only of the physical world (for example, that the mind is the locus of physical objects as they are perceived), James is compelled to make claims regarding single portions of the stream of consciousness which seem true only of consciousness as a whole, viz., that it 'knows.') James' notion of 'appropriation' may mitigate this difficulty. He seems to maintain that in knowing some percept, some portion of the external world, "the passing Thought" also 'appropriates' its predecessor in the stream of thought, and thereby its own past history. Thus there is perhaps a sense in which it is always some whole of consciousness which knows some percept. But it is not entirely clear that this is James' view, or that it is one which succeeds in surmounting the difficulty.

Further, the character of "warmth and intimacy" possessed by the states of a personal consciousness, James suggests, is identifiable with certain subtle organic or
internal sensations. He states, for example, that:

We spoke a moment since of warmth and intimacy. This leads us to the answer sought. For, whatever the thought we are criticising may think about its present self, that self comes to its acquaintance, or is actually felt, with warmth and intimacy. Of course this is the case with the bodily part of it; we feel the whole cubic mass of our body all the while, it gives us an unceasing sense of personal existence. Equally do we feel the inner 'nucleus of the spiritual self,' either in the shape of yon faint physiological adjustments, or (adopting the universal psychological belief), in that of the pure activity of our thought taking place as such. Our remoter spiritual, material, and social selves, so far as they are realized, come also with a glow and a warmth; for the thought of them infallibly brings some degree of organic emotion in the shape of quickened heart-beats, oppressed breathing, or some other alteration, even though it be a slight one, in the general bodily tone.72

Somewhat more generally James suggests that:

... our entire feeling of spiritual activity, or what commonly passes by that name, is really a feeling of bodily activities whose exact nature is by most men overlooked.73

A discussion of James' treatment of the mind-body problem has been avoided being considered as beyond the scope of this paper. The 'mind-matter' or 'mental-physical' problem, as the generic problem might be called, has been dealt with in this paper only in terms of its epistemological aspect, i.e., in terms of the problem of how a mind is related to--and distinguished from--external,

72 James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 333.
73 Ibid., pp. 301-302.
physical reality such as it cognizes in sense-experience (and also in other ways). Presumably, James' neutral monism includes or implies a view to the effect that one's bodily states are portions of pure experience and are bodily or physical not as such but in virtue of certain relations which they have. Thus E. B. Holt, for example, asserts:

But William James did not live to tell us what part the human brain and nervous system play in this identity of the mental and the physical. They must be implicated in some way.\(^7^4\)

Though this view will not be argued, it should at least be pointed out that James' discussion of personal identity in the Principles of Psychology is not patently inconsistent with a neutral monism regarding mind and body. Here James is concerned with "the consciousness of self,"\(^7^5\) with personal identity 'from the side of' consciousness, as it were. He does not identify a self or person with just a consciousness, for he distinguishes in his treatment of the problem between "the material self," of which "the body is the innermost part," and, on the other hand, "the spiritual self" and "the pure ego."\(^7^6\) Further, it is not evident that he distinguishes these as


\(^7^5\)James, The Principles of Psychology, I, the title of the chapter (X) under discussion.

\(^7^6\)Ibid., p. 292.
numerically different "constituents of the self," as he claims that "the most intimately felt part of its present Object" is "the body and the central adjustments, which accompany the act of thinking, in the head" and "these are the real nucleus of our personal identity." 

Section III

Before concluding the present chapter a discussion of James' view of the nature of conception is in order. Such a discussion is urged by two considerations: first, James' neutral monism purports in some way to encompass concepts as well as percepts; and second, James' pragmatism is brought to bear on what he often refers to as 'concepts,' i.e., it is concepts that in some sense are said by him to have meaning, be true or false, and so forth.

James' use of the term 'concept' is far from constant, but at least two uses of the term can be distinguished: one in which it designates "certain intellectual forms or categories of thought" by which means sense-experience is ordered and utilized, and one such as to

77Ibid., p. 292.
78Ibid., p. 341.
79James, Pragmatism, p. 114.
include within its extension "conceptual manifolds,"80 "memories,"81 "fancies"82--and, apparently, every mode of cognition other than sense-experience. The former use of the term will be recognized as being essentially the same as that discussed above in Section II of Chapter II. In this latter and more liberal sense of the term 'concept,' James generally opposes percepts and concepts, and as "things presented"83 and "things remote."84 In this vein he states:

'Things' are known to us by our senses, and are called 'presentations' by some authors, to distinguish them from the ideas or 'representations' which we may have when our senses are closed. I myself have grown accustomed to the words 'percept' and 'concept' in treating of the contrast, . . .85

It should be noted that James' use of the term 'concept' in this latter sense is both broader and more narrow than its ordinary meanings. One would not ordinarily use the term so as to include memories, for example, within its extension. Also, consistent with ordinary usage, one can use the term so as not to exclude from its

80 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 15.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
85 James, Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 47.
extension activities which directly involve "things presented," for example, to be able to pick out or recognize an x when presented with a group of things which includes an x is, one could say, to have a concept of 'x.' James' use of 'concept,' on the other hand, seems more or less the ordinary sense of 'idea' or 'thought.' Having a concept of 'x' is, accordingly, to think of x (or x's) (or, perhaps, to be able at will to think of x (or x's) when no x is actually present. James' pragmatism involves the bringing together, in some sense, of concepts and the world experienced, and what is thus suggested is that having a concept of 'x' involves being able to single out presented x's, utilize presented x's, and so forth. But James seems inclined to distinguish 'having a concept' and 'knowing the meaning of a concept,' his pragmatism being concerned, in part, with how the meanings of concepts are to be determined. These terminological difficulties notwithstanding, by this use of the term 'concept' James calls attention to a distinction between thinking of x (or x's) when it is absent and doing various things with x (or x's) when it is present.

ii

An attempt to extend James' neutral monism to include the sphere of concepts encounters initial difficulties. In the case of an object present and perceived (by
someone's senses) both the mental state and the physical object or event, which are claimed by James to be numerically identical, are readily disclosed. If I really see an object before me, i.e., I am not staring inattentively or hallucinating, both a certain mental state and some physical object or event is a part of the situation. However, I can presumably have a concept of an object without having a specific sort of mental state (for example, in correctly picking out red objects from those of some other color I need not necessarily mentally 'see' a red object) and/or without such an object existing in the physical world (for example, in conceiving a winged house or the number twelve). James' thesis that it is numerically the same 'stuff' as that of which physical reality is composed which is the content of sense-experience (see above, Chapter I, Section IV) has some degree of cogency. However, that this can be claimed regarding conceptual or abstract thought may seem quite implausible.

Thus the crucial question regarding James' view of conception in so far as it concerns his neutral monism is: with what sorts of entities in the stream of thought, on the one hand, and on the other, in the physical world, are concepts to be identified? As to the locus of concepts in the stream of thought, James for the most part finds them in the fringe of conscious states or in
transitive states of consciousness. He states, for example, regarding concepts that:

It is one of those evanescent and 'transitive' facts of mind which introspection cannot turn round upon, and isolate and hold up for examination, as an entomologist passes round an insect on a pin. In the (somewhat clumsy) terminology I have used, it pertains to the 'fringe' of the subjective state, and is a 'feeling of tendency'...  

Stated in terms of the discussion of an earlier portion of this paper (see above, Chapter II, Section I, v), concepts fringe a field of experience, not being something presented in that field—in the manner of some physical datum—but, nonetheless, making themselves felt, both by qualifying the conscious state as a whole and by organizing sense-experience and orienting behavior. In other words, concepts occur within a field of experience as feelings of affinity, or felt relations, which some datum has to others. Perhaps the best description of this which James provides is in terms of "the topic" of a train of thought:

In all our voluntary thinking there is some topic or subject about which all the members of the thought revolve. Half the time this topic is a problem, a gap we cannot yet fill with a definite picture, word, or phrase, but which, in the manner described some time back, influences us in an intensely active and determinate psychic way.... Or instead of a definite gap we may merely carry a mood of interest about with us. Then, however vague the mood, it will still

86James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 472.
act in the same way, throwing a mantle of felt
affinity over such representations, entering the
mind, as suit it, and tingeing with the feeling
of tediousness or discord all those with which
it has no concern.87

Given such a view regarding the status of con-
cepts in the stream of thought, it appears that concepts
are not to be identified with 'neutral' entities or por-
tions of pure experience, but with certain sorts of
relations obtaining between them. The transitive and
fringe portions of the stream of thought (as it has been
argued above, see Chapter II, Section I) are among the
relations connecting or continuing states of conscious-
ness; and as such, it is in virtue of them that a stream
of thought rather than a flow of physical events is
formed. That is: the transitive and fringe portions of
the stream of thought so relate its substantive and focal
portions that the latter are conscious states, rather than
physical or merely 'neutral' entities. Accordingly, con-
cepts correspond to the relations between portions of pure
experience in virtue of which the latter are mental, in
much the same way as percepts correspond to portions of
pure experience. Thus: corresponding in a general way to
the first of the two senses of the term 'concept' distin-
guished above in the beginning of this section is the
view of concepts as they occur in the stream of conscious-

87 Ibid., p. 259.
ness as in its fringe and transitive portions, i.e., as relations within consciousness which serve to order its content in various ways.

According to this interpretation, James, strictly speaking, adopts neither the conceptualism of Locke, nor the nominalism of Berkeley. That is, he denies that concepts (and thus, 'abstract' or 'general' ideas) are of the nature of images, or substantive states, but also denies that they are merely a function (that of 'standing for' or 'representing') which images somehow assume. Concepts function in consciousness to relate its contents, to give a train of thought a certain direction and destination, and so forth; but concepts are also felt (as relations or transitions), are themselves part of the content of consciousness. Thus as a rejoinder to Locke, James might claim that:

I say nothing here of the preposterously false descriptive psychology involved in the statement that the only things we can mentally picture are individuals completely determinate in all regards. For even if it were true that our images were always of concrete individuals, it would not in the least follow that our meanings were of the same.88

What must be admitted is that the definite images of traditional psychology form but the very smallest part of our minds as they actually live.89

88Ibid., p. 472.
89Ibid., p. 255.
and in rebuttal to Berkeley, that:

The contrast is really between two aspects, in which all mental facts without exception may be taken; their structural aspect, as being subjective, and their functional aspect, as being cognitions. In the former aspect, the highest as well as the lowest is a feeling, a peculiarly tinged segment of the stream. . . . In the latter aspect, the lowest mental fact as well as the highest may grasp some bit of truth as its content, even though that truth were as relationless a matter as a bare unlocalized and undated quality of pain. From the cognitive point of view, all mental facts are intellections. From the subjective point of view all are feelings.90

iii

However, certain of James' statements give evidence that he regards concepts as sometimes occurring as substantive or focal portions of consciousness, as well as in its transitions and fringe:

The lingering consciousnesses, if of simple objects, we call 'sensations' or 'images,' according as they are vivid or faint; if of complex objects, we call them 'percepts' when vivid, 'concepts' or 'thoughts' when faint. For the swift consciousnesses we have only those names of 'transitive states,' or 'feelings of relation,' which we have used.91

It would seem that the case in point is one in which one thinks of an absent object or event, and thus that the second of the two of James' uses of 'concept' distinguished above at the beginning of this section corresponds in

90 Ibid., p. 478.
91 Ibid., pp. 246-247.
the stream of thought to concepts as substantive states of consciousness.

But this conclusion should be tempered by the following considerations. According to James, even when one thinks of an absent object or event with eyes closed in a quiet room, and so forth, sensations of some sort enter into one's stream of thought. In other words, every section of a stream of thought can be characterized as a field of experience. And further, these sensational and conceptual contents occur as part of a single conscious whole. (In other words, a description similar to that given in Chapter II, Section I, v, could be given for conception, where 'thinking of an absent object or event' would occupy the focus of the field of consciousness.) Thus, regarded as psychological states, the difference between perception and conception is one of structure or relation as well as content, depending, that is, on whether it is a percept or a concept that is substantive and focal, rather than transitional and marginal. Generally speaking, the psychological state is designated by James as 'conception' (in this sense) when one is absorbed in one's thoughts, when one's center of attention is the thought of some absent object or event, and so forth, and it is designated as 'perception' (see above, Chapter II, Section I, ix) when something presently perceived is that
which is being attended to.

It should be noted, however, that even as a focal or substantive state of consciousness a concept is such in virtue of having a conceptual function, i.e., in virtue of its relations to other mental states (which relations are felt in the concept's own conscious state as its fringe). Just as a portion of pure experience is a mental state in virtue of certain of its relations, a mental state which is a concept is such in virtue of certain of its relations. Stated in a cursory way, common to all mental states is their function of 'knowing'; concepts have the cognitive function of 'representing' some physical reality, percepts, that of 'presenting' them (see above, Section II, vi, of this chapter). For this reason, James states that:

The function by which we thus identify a numerically distinct and permanent subject of discourse is called CONCEPTION; and the thoughts which are its vehicles are called concepts. But the word 'concept' is often used as if it stood for the object of discourse itself; and this looseness feeds such evasiveness in discussion that I shall avoid the use of the expression concept altogether, and speak of 'conceiving state of mind,' or something similar, instead. The word 'conception' is unambiguous. It properly denotes neither the mental state nor what the mental state signifies, but the relation between the two, namely, the function of the mental state in signifying just that particular thing.\footnote{Ibid., p. 461.}

Accordingly, "concerning state of mind" would be a more appropriate designation than 'concept.' However, the
latter designation is used for its convenience. (Analogously, 'mental entity' is often used, rather than some such expression as 'portion of pure experience having mental characteristics in virtue of its relations.' In both cases a certain amount of accuracy is sacrificed for convenience.)

iv

It is apparently regarding concepts when as conscious states they occur as substantive or focal (i.e., 'conception' as defined immediately above) that James states the following:

... what I maintain is, that any single non-perceptual experience tends to get counted twice over, just as a perceptual experience does, figuring in one context as an object or field of objects, in another as a state of mind: and all this without the least internal self-diremption on its own part into consciousness and content. It is all consciousness in one taking; and, in the other, all content.93

The sense of the distinction between "an object or field of objects" or "content" and "a state of mind" or "consciousness" is obscure. One way of construing the distinction is as follows:

The contrast is not, then, as the Platonists would have it, between certain subjective facts called images and sensations, and others called acts of relating intelligence; ... The contrast is really between two aspects, in which all mental facts without exception may be taken; their structural aspect, as being subjective, and their

93 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, pp. 17-18.
functional aspect, as being cognitions. In the former aspect, the highest as well as the lowest is a feeling, a peculiarly tinged segment of the stream. . . . In the latter aspect, the lowest mental fact as well as the highest may grasp some bit of truth as its content, even though that truth were as relationless a matter as a bare unlocalized and undated quality of pain. From the cognitive point of view, all mental facts are intellections. From the subjective point of view all are feelings.94

This is essentially the distinction implied above. A concept is felt as part of the conscious state as a whole and also has the cognitive function of relating the conscious state with others. But so far, as an entity, the "object or field of objects" is indistinguishable from "a state of mind." Concepts have a different cognitive function than do percepts (roughly, concepts cognize something by 'representing' it), yet since it is a cognitive function and also felt as part of a conscious state, concepts are not 'neutral,' as opposed to either physical, or merely 'mental' entities.

If, on the other hand, James is using such phrases as "an object or field of objects" and "content" in the above passage so as to denote some portion of physical reality, i.e., if he maintains that concepts are numerically identical with some portion of physical reality, he is committing himself to a presentative view regarding conception as well as perception.

James states, for example, the following regarding the "world merely 'thought of'":

We find that any bit of it which we may cut out as as example is connected with distinct groups of associates, just as our perceptual experiences are, that these associates link themselves with it by different relations, and that one forms the inner history of a person, while the other acts as an impersonal 'objective' world, either spatial and temporal, or else merely logical or mathematical, or otherwise 'ideal.'

James quotes with approval a passage from Munsterberg's Grundzuge which reads in part as follows:

"I may only think of my objects, . . . yet, in my living thought they stand before me exactly as perceived objects would do, no matter how different the two ways of apprehending them may be in their genesis. The book here lying on the table before me, and the book in the next room of which I think and which I mean to get, are both in the same sense given realities for me, realities which I acknowledge and of which I take account. If you agree that the perceptual object is not an idea within me, but that percept and thing, as indistinguishably one, are really experienced there, outside, you ought not to believe that the merely thought-of object is hid away inside of the thinking subject. The object of which I think, and of whose existence I take cognizance without letting it not work upon my senses, occupies its definite place in the outer world as much as does the object which I directly see."  

The view expressed here would seem to be to the effect that (borrowing the example used in the passage) my concept or "thought" of "the book in the next room of

95 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 16.  
96 Ibid., pp. 18-19.
which I think" is numerically identical with that book. Even if, as the passage indicates, a presentative view regarding concepts has a prima facie plausibility once such a view is assumed regarding perception (which James of course does; see above, Chapter I, Section IV), it generates two problems for James. It renders his neutral monism incapable of accounting for the fundamental difference between conception and perception (see above Chapter I, Section IV) and of maintaining the epistemological primacy of the latter (see above, Chapter II, Section III). 97

Nonetheless, James' neutral monism can be sustained without it being affirmed that a concept is numerically identical with some non-mental entity. He can continue to maintain that every entity, as such, is 'neutral' in character, being mental or physical, as the case may be, in virtue of being a relatum in a relation or relations of one kind or another. In other words, James can yet consistently maintain that concepts are "mere bits of pure experience," 98 are of the same kind of stuff as that of physical reality:

97 For a discussion of the fundamental difference between conception and perception, for James, and the primacy of the latter, see, for example, R. B. Perry, In the Spirit of William James (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), Chapter II.

98 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 15.
My thesis is that if we start with the supposition that there is only one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed, and if we call that stuff 'pure experience,' then knowing can easily be explained as a particular sort of relation towards one another into which portions of pure experience may enter.\(^9\)

Thus, his being constrained to claim that concepts as entities are not numerically identical with some portion of physical reality is tantamount to claiming that concepts are portions of pure experience which are relata in relations of only one generic sort, viz., those in virtue of being a relatum in which an entity is mental in kind.

Yet there is a sense in which James' view is consistent with some sort of realism. Stated quite simply, the view regarding concepts adopted by the realist is that an elementary quality such as 'redness' would in some sense exist even if it were never cognized in any way, i.e., even if it were never instanced as someone's 'conceiving state of mind.' It has been argued in James' behalf that pure experience is genuinely 'neutral.' At least according to the ontological notion of pure experience, pure experience is in no way 'mind-dependent' (see above, Chapter II, Section III, for discussion of this claim). Thus, in that concepts are here identified with portions of pure experience they have a 'mind-independent' nature.

or 'real' existence. That they are in many—and perhaps every—instance also someone's concept or 'conceiving state of mind' consists only in their being terms in external relations of a certain kind. Hence, it would seem that James can consistently affirm the following view:

What I am affirming here is the platonic doctrine that concepts are singulars, that concept-stuff is inalterable, and that physical realities are constituted by the various concept-stuff of which they 'partake.' It is known as 'logical realism' in the history of philosophy. . . .

However, this is not also to say that James vitiates his radical empiricism by embracing some sort of Platonic metaphysics, and 'ideal world' of sorts. A major philosophical motive behind his neutral monism is presumably that of granting to concepts (and in general, consciousness) an ontological status, a foothold in reality, so to speak, while at the same time not relegating them completely to the limbo of a purely subjective or 'inner' realm. Accordingly, he maintains that concepts are entities, but not as such—but in virtue of their relations—mental entities. But it is surely not to James' purpose here to find a second home, as it were, for concepts in the limbo of some ideal realm. That is to say, the notion of an ideal entity, or even that of ideal but real relations in virtue of which an entity is 'more than' mental,

100 James, Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 106.
poses at least as many difficulties as that of a 'merely' mental entity.

v

Rather than being portions of pure experience numerically identical with portions of physical reality concepts are portions of pure experience which have assumed the function of representing them. But what is the nature of this function which characterizes them? For the most part James describes it in terms of a mental state's (a concept's) relations to others to which the former tends or leads and which it thereby 'knows,' the latter mental states being numerically identical with portions of the physical world, i.e., being percepts rather than concepts. These relations are such as were designated above as that of "representation" (see Section II, v, of this chapter) and knowing "conceptually and or representatively" (see Chapter II, Section I, viii).

Thus according to James our knowing of the physical world is essentially of two sorts: either some particular conscious state and some particular portion of the physical world are

(1) the self-same piece of experience taken twice over in different contexts; or they are
(2) two pieces of actual experience belonging to the same subject, with definite tracts of conjunction transitional experience between
A discussion of the former mode of cognition appears above (see Chapter I, Section IV). Concerning the latter mode of cognition, James states the following:

Suppose me to be sitting here in my library at Cambridge, at ten minutes' walk from 'Memorial Hall,' and to be thinking truly of the latter object. My mind may have before it only the name, or it may have a clear image, or it may have a very dim image of the hall, but such intrinsic differences in the image make no difference in its cognitive function. Certain extrinsic phenomena, special experiences of conjunction, are what impart to the image, be it what it may, its knowing office.

For instance, if you ask me what hall I mean by my image, and I can tell you nothing; or if I fail to point or lead you towards the Harvard Delta; or if, being led by you, I am uncertain whether the Hall I see be what I had in mind or not; you would rightly deny that I 'meant' that particular hall at all, even though my mental image might to some degree have resembled it. The resemblance would count in that case as coincidental merely, for all sorts of things of a kind resemble one another in this world without being held for that reason to take cognizance of one another.

On the other hand, if I can lead you to the hall, and tell you of its history and present uses; if in its presence I feel my idea, however imperfect it may have been to have led hither and to be now terminated; if the associates of the image and of the felt hall run parallel, so that each term of the one context corresponds serially as I walk, with an answering term of the others; why then my soul was prophetic, and my idea must be, and by common consent would be, called cognizant of reality.102

101 Ibid., p. 53.
102 Ibid., pp. 54-56.
Whenever one is "thinking truly" of an object, i.e., thinking of some existent object and as existent, the thought is accompanied by a 'feeling of tendency' (occurring in the fringe of the conscious state and as a sense of the thought's relations to others) in virtue of which the thought 'represents' that object in that it prompts ways of behaving and perceiving which ultimately 'lead to' a perception of that object. The thought may be termed 'the knower' and the object, 'what is known':

their starting-point thereby becomes a knower and their terminus an object meant or known.\textsuperscript{103}

But the knowing is of the nature of "a particular sort of relation."\textsuperscript{104} That is:

Certain extrinsic phenomena, special experiences of conjunction, are what impart to the image, be it what it may, its knowing office.\textsuperscript{105}

In terms of James' neutral monism this process or procedure of 'knowing representatively' can be described as one which is both part of a stream of thought and part of the physical world (except perhaps for the thought which initiates it). The thought which serves as the beginning point in the process belongs to a consciousness, as a substantive state of consciousness. It is accom-

\textsuperscript{103}Ibid., p. 57.  
\textsuperscript{104}Ibid., p. 4.  
\textsuperscript{105}Ibid., p. 55.
panied by a fringe and is followed by transitive states which serve to relate that thought to others, forming a progression of thoughts terminating in some percept. The percept, as an experience, is a mental state, but as what is thereby experienced, a part of the physical world. Furthermore when the tendency of the initial thought is thus developed, the process realized as one which terminates in some percept, other percepts constitute the substantive states composing the stream of thought (other than that which is the initial thought) which, as percepts, are also components of the physical world. Stated in terms of James' example of 'knowing representatively' Harvard's Memorial Hall (see above quotation):

... the associates of the image and of the felt hall run parallel, so that each term of the one context corresponds serially, as I walk, with an answering term of the others ...  

That is to say, besides being a progression of thoughts it is a succession of percepts. Thus James can assert regarding "the knowing of perceptual by conceptual experiences" that:

... I could perfectly well define, without the notion of 'consciousness,' what the knowing actually and practically amounts to—leading-towards, namely, and terminating-in percepts, through a series of transitional experiences which the world supplies.  

106 Ibid., p. 56.
107 Ibid., p. 25.
Thus, in a sense, the above described process is one which leads from consciousness to physical reality, as its departure is a thought with its fringe of affinities and its destination is a perception of physical reality. But in another sense, it is a process which, due to its two aspects, is constitutive of both consciousness and physical reality. In other words, in virtue of its being an instance of knowing the external world (i.e., in virtue of the kind of relations composing the process) the process is a mental one; in virtue of its being the external world which is known (i.e., in virtue of the relata of those relations being relata in relations of yet another kind) the process is also physical in character.

Accordingly, James claims that 'knowing representatively' has "objective reference"\(^{108}\) and "self-transcendence,"\(^{109}\) but without requiring "a chasm and a mortal leap."\(^{110}\) That is to say, as accounted for by his view, knowing in this mode is neither saltatory nor solypsistic: not saltatory, because the relations between conscious states composing the process are continuous or transitional, and not solypsistic, because the mental states so related are percepts, are in turn related to other constituents of

\(^{108}\)Ibid., p. 67.
\(^{109}\)Ibid., p. 73.
\(^{110}\)Ibid., p. 70.
reality so as to be part of the external world.
CHAPTER IV

In the lecture from Pragmatism entitled "What Pragmatism Means" James identifies the two main elements of his pragmatism as being a method and a theory of truth; for he states that: "Such then would be the scope of pragmatism—first, a method; and second, a genetic theory of what is meant by truth."¹ James, however, also uses the term 'attitude' in explicating his pragmatism, and further, his pragmatic method overtly involves some view regarding the nature of meaning. Consequently, at the outset four elements of James' pragmatism can be discerned: pragmatism as an attitude, as a method, as a conception of meaning, and as a theory of truth.

Section I

As an attitude, pragmatism is more general and less explicit, the method, it would seem, brings this attitude to some sort of focus. Borrowing from the language of Pragmatism's first lecture, this attitude might be described as the expression of a particular kind of tempera-

¹James, Pragmatism, p. 53.

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ment."² It is largely "Tough-Minded"³ being disdainful of pedantry, abstruseness, dogmatism, and remoteness from experience and action. Regarded as an attitude, James states the following concerning his pragmatism:

Pragmatism represents a perfectly familiar attitude in philosophy, the empiricist attitude, but it represents it, as it seems to me, both in a more radical and in a less objectionable form than it has ever yet assumed. A pragmatist turns his back resolutely and once for all upon a lot of inveterate habits dear to professional philosophers. He turns away from abstraction and insufficiency, from verbal solutions, from bad a priori reasons, from fixed principles, closed systems, and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action and towards power. That means the empiricist temper regnant and the rationalist temper sincerely given up. It means the open air and possibilities of nature, as against dogma, artificiality, and the pretence of finality in truth.⁴

James delineates his pragmatic method as follows:

The pragmatic method is primarily a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable. Is the world one or many? --fated or free?--material or spiritual?--here are notions either of which may or may not hold good of the world; and disputes over such notions are unending. The pragmatic method in such cases is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to any one if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical

²Ibid., p. 19.
³Ibid., p. 22.
⁴Ibid., p. 45.
difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle. Whenever a dispute is serious, we ought to be able to show some practical difference that must follow from one side or the other's being right.\(^5\)

The purpose of the method is the solution of individual problems and is thus piecemeal in its results. Hence, it is an empiricist method, as James often uses the term:

Empiricism proceeds from parts to wholes, treating the parts as fundamental both in the order of being and in the order of our knowledge.\(^6\)

Further, the method is 'metaphysical' in that the problems for which it is primarily employed are "metaphysical disputes," for example: "Is the world one or many?--fated or free?--material or spiritual?" But the method can solve a metaphysical dispute only in the sense of dissolving it. It sifts out those disputes which are genuine and clarifies them, but the method itself cannot solve such a dispute, i.e., determine which of two meaningful solutions to a problem is the true one. Thus there would appear to be a fairly sharp distinction between James' pragmatic method and view of meaning, on the one hand, and his criterion or theory of truth, on the other.\(^7\)

\(^5\) Ibid., pp. 42-43.
\(^6\) James, Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 98.
However, it is to be emphasized from the outset
that James does not conceive his pragmatic method to be
a means of devastating metaphysics, or dismissing all
metaphysical problems. True enough, many metaphysical
disputes fall victim of the method, according to James:

It is astonishing to see how many philosophical
disputes collapse into insignificance the moment
you subject them to this simple test of tracing
a concrete consequence.\(^8\)

Yet, on the other hand, he maintains that:

The whole function of philosophy ought to be to
find out what definite difference it will make
to you and me, at definite instants of our life,
if this world-formula or that world-formula be
the true one.\(^9\)

In other words, James does not conceive the method as a
program—"it does not stand for any special results"
being "a method only."\(^10\) To contend that metaphysical
claims are in \textit{principle} meaningless would surely strike
James as an instance of arguing "from bad \textit{a priori} rea-
sons, from fixed principles,"\(^11\) i.e., as against the grain
of the pragmatic attitude.

The definition of 'the pragmatic method' provided
by the passage quoted above is virtually circular, since
such expressions as 'practical consequences' and 'practi-
cal differences' are not elucidated. The passage is followed by another in which this defect is somewhat remedied. Here James asserts that:

To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, then, we need only consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve—what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects, whether immediate or remote, is then for us the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all.12

Thus James appears to be maintaining that the meaning of a thought, notion or concept consists in the practical effects which are, in some sense, entailed by, its being true, and these practical effects consist of certain sensations and reactions. (Henceforth, just the term 'concept' will be used for the sake of consistency, though James uses a variety of terms and seems to favor terms other than 'concept.' See above, Chapter III, Section III, i, for a discussion of James' use of 'concept.')

Before exploring such a view regarding the nature of meaning it is to be observed that, as a method of settling metaphysical disputes, the pragmatic method does not presuppose that the whole of the meaning of every notion consists in certain practical consequences. It presupposes, rather, that the meanings of metaphysical

12 Ibid., p. 43.
notions, i.e., those of such kind as are involved in metaphysical disputes, reside in practical consequences. It is thus left open to James to maintain, for example, that the meanings of analytic statements are quite independent of practical consequences, and that those of ordinary synthetic statements are only partly determined by them. Indeed, it is in a sense because other sorts of criteria are not forthcoming—linguistic conventions, mental images or associations or precisely predictable and carefully controllable sense experiences, for example—that the identification of meaning and practical consequences is made plausible in the case of metaphysical notions.

iii

Thus, James' view, briefly stated, is that the pragmatic meaning of a concept consists in "what sensations we are to expect" and "what reactions we must prepare" as entailed by it. The interpretation given in what follows is that, according to James, for a concept to have a pragmatic meaning, at least in a strict sense, both of these components are required: the entailment of a certain action(s) prescribed and experience(s) predicted are each necessary but only together sufficient conditions for a concept's having a pragmatic meaning. It is pragmatic meaning which metaphysical concepts have (when they are
at all meaningful), as well as a large part of all human thought and discourse. What serves to distinguish metaphysical concepts from other sorts of concepts having pragmatic meaning will be discussed later. Accordingly, a metaphysical concept is meaningful if and only if it has a pragmatic content, i.e., both prescribes action and predicts future experiences.

This is not of course to assert that concepts that lie beyond the scope of James' pragmatic method and conception of meaning are meaningless. It is open to James to grant meaning, both cognitive and non-cognitive, to other sorts of concepts which lack either or both elements of pragmatic meaning. Thus, roughly speaking, analytic statements (such as found in mathematics) are meaningful though lacking both elements of pragmatic meaning (neither prescribing action nor predicting experiences), synthetic statements (such as typify the propositions embodying the knowledge of the empirical sciences) are meaningful in so far as they predict future experiences, and normative statements (such as belong to the domain of ethics) are meaningful though they only prescribe modes of conduct. However, in the strict sense, none of these kinds of statements are pragmatic in meaning, and although metaphysical concepts are not of any of the above three kinds, in that some metaphysical concepts have a pragmatic content, they are meaningful in that regard.
It is thus to be observed that, as a method of settling metaphysical disputes, the pragmatic method does not presuppose that the whole of the meaning of every concept consists in certain practical consequences. Furthermore, even though James' notion of pragmatic meaning has its applications to, or implications for, mundane as well as metaphysical problems, it nonetheless does not in any sense presuppose a general theory as to the nature of meaning, i.e., one which would in effect reduce all meaning to a single kind. Accordingly, the discussion of the nature of meaning to follow is to be understood as restricted in scope to meaning only in so far as it is directly involved in our thought and action regarding the world.

iv

Stated more fully, James' position would seem to be that concepts signify both what things are useful to us and in what ways they are to be used. In other words, a concept of an object foretells "what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare,"\(^{13}\) i.e., it indicates when to react and also how. To adapt an illustration of James,\(^{14}\) if one is lost in the woods, knowing what a cow-path is amounts to knowing when one is

\(^{13}\) Ibid.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 134.
discovered (i.e., what one looks like) and how to make use of it (viz., to follow the path to its termination at some human habitation). This view can be further explicated by considering such a passage from James as the following:

The structural unit of the nervous system is in fact a triad, neither of whose elements has any independent existence. The sensory impression exists only for the sake of awakening the central process of reflection, and the central process of reflection exists only for the sake of calling forth the final act. All action is thus re-action upon the outer world; and the middle stage of consideration or contemplation or thinking is only a place of transit, the bottom of a loop, both of whose ends have their point of application in the outer world.15

Corresponding to the elements of this neurological or psychological unit of sensation-reflection-reaction are those of the meaning of a concept of an object or event, viz., the concept is of such sensations as betoken a certain kind of object or event and a reflective or reasoned reaction to it, i.e., behavior aimed at the derivation of some satisfaction. Just as sensation, reflection, and reaction have no independent existence but together form a unit, the corresponding elements of meaning are not separable and independent.

One is tempted to object by claiming that only the sensations we expect or eventually receive from the object constitute the meaning of the concept of it, and that the manner in which it would be appropriate to behave toward

15 James, Essays on Faith and Morals, pp. 113-114.
the object is altogether another matter. For after all, if certain sensations are sufficient to identify the object (which they must in some sense be if one is to know when, or toward what objects, one is to behave in a specific way) these sensations surely disclose what the object is and thus the meaning of the concept of it.

However, as was shown above (see Chapter II, Section I, ix, and Section II, iii), James maintains that we react upon our sensations even as we receive them, that by impressing our aims even upon what is sensed we help shape the character of the world that thus comes into our view. We attend to those from among our sensations that interest us, that, immediately or remotely, serve to bring about the attainment of our aims. The result is that we in effect select those qualities of objects and events that further our aims and make them representative of the object, i.e., we in this way evolve a concept of the object. Accordingly, a chair, as an experienced object, is not one having various inert physical qualities, which object can be used to sit in, but as an object-to-be-sat-in, and an apple is not experienced as an object with certain qualities, which object can be eaten, but as an object-to-be-eaten. Stated somewhat differently, a concept of a chair is epitomized by something like a certain sensation of relaxation and comfort, one of an apple, by
a certain sweet and somewhat tart taste.

One might accordingly think of a concept of an object as being like a vector pointing or passing from antecedent sensations to consequent satisfactions. Somewhat as painted arrows along roadsides and in public buildings conduct us to desired destinations, concepts direct us to various satisfactions; and further, in somewhat the same sense that the visible arrows mean nothing more than their pointing or directing function, meaning in general—as anything other than sensational and behavioral data—consists in nothing other than a directing function. In accord with such a view, James states the following concerning the genesis of concepts:

Men classed their sensations, substituting concepts for them, in order to 'work then for what they were worth,' and to prepare for what might lie ahead. Class-names suggest consequences that have attached themselves on other occasions to other members of the class—consequences which the percept will also probably or certainly show. The present percept in its immediacy may thus often sink to the status of a bare sign of the consequences which the substituted concept suggests.16

In claiming that the idea of an object indicates both when and how we are to react to our environment in order to gain certain satisfactions, James seems committed to asserting that 'x is an apple,' for example, means something like: 'x is red, round, glossy and if nourish-

16 James, *Some Problems of Philosophy*, pp. 63-64.
ment is desired, x should be eaten.' Further, in that he claims that what we desire and how we are to behave to fulfill our desire in some sense conditions the nature of our environment as we perceive it (the sensations to which we attend, and so forth), it would seem that he must also assert that the predicates to be applied to 'x' (such as red, round, and glossy) differ somewhat with what is desired and what is to be done to realize it. In other words, since the sensations we have condition our reactions (by indicating the proximity of useful objects) and our reactions, in turn, condition the sensations we have (by drawing our interest to those qualities of objects in virtue of which they are useful), the qualities by which objects are recognized tend to be those most directly involved in our reactions. This is perhaps obscured by the fact that almost any object is potentially useful in a vast variety of respects, and consequently, many different qualities of a given object are of interest. Being useful in virtue of a number of different qualities, no single quality is characteristic of the object.

It might be objected that James' position involves an ambiguity, viz., it is not evident as to whether it is the sensations that evoke the reactions or, on the other hand, the reactions that evoke the sensations. In other
words: does the concept's meaning consist in certain sensations and those reactions that are consequent to them as appropriate and efficacious (i.e., the sensations in effect indicating when and how to react in order to obtain certain ends); or, does it consist in certain sensations and those reactions that are antecedent to them as conditions for their occurrence (i.e., the reactions being in effect operations to be performed in order to obtain the sensations)? Though this is not entirely clear, it would appear that James adopts the former of the alternatives. Consider, for example, the following:

To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object . . . we need only consider what . . . sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. . . . The ultimate test for us of what a truth means is indeed the conduct it dictates or inspires. But it inspires that conduct because it first foretells some particular turn to our experience which shall call for just that conduct from us.  

James would, however, seem to view the latter conception of meaning as one that can be subsumed under the former, for the dominating factor in all human activities is utility, i.e., we act—whether the context be a laboratory or our lives—in order to achieve certain aims. Thus he states that:

The willing department of our nature, in short, dominates both the conceiving department and the

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feeling department; or, in plainer English, perception and thinking are only there for behavior's sake.\footnote{18}

James would have us view an experimental procedure, for example, not merely within the context of the immediate aim of the experimenter (viz., to produce and record certain sensations as the result of carrying out certain operations in the laboratory) nor even within that of his long-range interests as a scientific investigator (viz., to procure a knowledge of certain sorts of phenomena), but also with its connections with human aims and interests in general. He states, accordingly, that:

The interest of theoretic rationality, the relief of identification, is but one of a thousand human purposes.\footnote{19}

Thus the sensations sought, consequent upon the performance of certain experimental operations, can be viewed in a more general way as a desired end, obtained as the result of certain actions and reactions.

Thus concepts do not so much serve to describe the world around us as they prescribe modes of behavior as appropriate to it, that is, as efficacious for human aims and interests having that world as their setting. In other words, concepts do not simply serve to predict the future course of experience, for the occurrence of these experi-

\footnote{18}{James, Faith and Morals, p. 114.}

\footnote{19}{Ibid., p. 70.}
ences are, to some extent, contingent upon our actions, and our actions, are in turn, contingent upon our aims and interests. If humans were merely passive observers of the flow of events around them, much as the prisoners in Plato's Allegory of the Cave, it might be otherwise. But our being interested in what occurs involves our action and the outcome of these events, which brings with it a whole perspective for our thought and experience.

But also, our concepts are about the empirical world, as acting so as to obtain ends involves knowing when (on the occasion of what sorts of sensations), how (by means of what physical operations), and for what (what sorts of sensations indicate our success) to act. To beings unable to respond to their experience with interest and action, for example, those shackled prisoners of Plato's allegory, the passage of events would indeed become a sort of shadow-show. We are assured that our thought and discourse is about, or of, a real world because its consequences are realized there. In short, concepts are for ends, about the world, and expressed in action.

vi

What has so far been said concerning James' view of the nature of meaning might be stated in a general way somewhat as follows. A word for an object does not have
a single, fixed meaning apart from a context. It means somewhat different things depending on how and for what the object is to be used, i.e., its meaning is determinate only in the light of some purpose. Accordingly, James asserts that:

Every way of classifying a thing is but a way of handling it for some particular purpose. Conceptions, 'kinds,' are teleological instruments. No abstract concept can be a valid substitute for a concrete reality except with reference to a particular interest in the conceiver.20

Thus the words (phrases, sentences, and so forth) used to talk about the world derive their meanings not only from the nature of the world, but from the nature of the purposes or pursuits of those who use them. In other words, they obtain their meanings as part of a total pattern of human life. Thus it can be inferred that the meanings of words for objects is bound up with the discourse in which they occur, for their linguistic context serves to disclose the aims and interests of those who use them. This context indicates how these words are being used, and thus what they are used to mean. But though our linguistic behavior reveals what our words are used to mean, their meanings are not completely confined within this context, for they are, in a sense, part of the yet larger

20 James, Essays on Faith and Morals, p. 70.
context of human behavior in general and its environment. According to James, thought has as its function not merely communication, i.e., to assimilate us to a human community, but to advance that community as well. To use language (as an instrument or form of thought) is thus to use it with human aims and aspirations and the instruments and opportunities our environment makes available in view.

vii

If what is implied here is that James' view of the nature of meaning differs somewhat from the current view that the meaning of a word is its use in a language, it is to be pointed out that his view is also to be distinguished from what might be termed the traditional views of meaning. On the one hand, James abandons a referential theory of meaning, for he maintains that how and for what purpose the referent is to be used is a part of the meaning of the word used in referring to it, that part of the meaning of 'apple,' for example, is something like 'an object to be eaten for nourishment.' As was argued above, almost any object is useful or harmful in a number of ways, i.e., it implements or impedes a number of human purposes. Thus the meaning which some particular utterance of a word for an object assumes varies with the particular purpose in view. Though these purposes are constant to a large extent, for the same person on dif-
ferent occasions and for different persons (on the same or
different occasions), they are obviously not completely so.
Thus not only is the meaning of the word for an object
always more than its referent, but this additional com-
ponent of meaning varies with different occurrences of
the word. Since different occurrences of a word for an
object can have the same referent and yet different mean-
ings, it follows that the meaning of the word is not its
referent.

A further objection, and for James a more forceful
one, to a referential theory of meaning is indicated by
the nature of the pragmatic method. James' concern with
the general problem of meaning is intimately related
with a concern with the problem of the nature of effective
inquiry. As was pointed out above (see Section I, ii, of
this chapter) the pragmatic method cannot be used to
settle a metaphysical dispute, except in those instances
in which applying it does so by dissolving the dispute.
James is, however, far more interested in the former type
of dispute, and conceives the use of the pragmatic method
to be a prelude to the solution of such disputes. Thus
James' central concern here is with how to elucidate
discourse in general, and metaphysical disputes in partic-
ular, as a preparation for intellectual decision and
discovery. Referring is one of the ways in which language
is used, and this James would surely concede. His quarrel is with those who would place this use of language at the center of importance, for doing so promotes the notion that to name an object or event is to know it, or at least be placed at a vantage point from which one can best gain knowledge of it. James, on the contrary, claims that labeling, sorting, and arranging reality's items (or our thoughts concerning them) is to little purpose here. Thus James must reject a referential theory of meaning in that it in effect regards such uses of language as paradigmatic. Thus he asserts:

Metaphysics has usually followed a very primitive kind of quest. You know how men have always hankered after unlawful magic, and you know what a great part in magic words have always played. If you have his name, or the formula of incantation that binds him, you can control the spirit, genie, afrite, or whatever the power may be. Solomon knew the names of all the spirits, and having their names, he held them subject to his will. So the universe has always appeared to the natural mind as a kind of enigma, of which the key must be sought in the shape of some illuminating or power-bringing word or name. That word names the universe's principle, and to possess it is after a fashion to possess the universe itself. 'God,' 'Matter,' 'Reason,' 'the Absolute,' 'Energy,' are so many solving names. You can rest when you have them. You are at the end of your metaphysical quest.

But if you follow the pragmatic method, you cannot look on any such word as closing your quest. You must bring out of each word its practical cash-value, set it at work within the stream of your experience. It appears less as a solution, then, than as a program for more work, and more particularly as in indication of the ways in which exist-
James' view of the nature of meaning also differs significantly from an ideational theory. The preceding empiricists appear committed to a view which makes of meaning something inner and subjective, and thus, in a sense, concealed and inaccessible. Locke, for example, claims that written and spoken words are sensible signs of ideas private to their users, that such ideas constitute the meanings of words. Thus he states that:

Besides articulate sounds, therefore, it was further necessary that he should be able to use these sounds as signs of internal conceptions; and to make them stand as marks for the ideas within his own mind, whereby they might be made known to others, and the thoughts of men's minds be conveyed from one to another.22

Thus that which has meaning (a word) is public and perceptible, but its meaning (an idea) is not.

What seems to vex James most about this view is not the epistemological problems it generates so much as the method it prompts or implies. The endeavor to elucidate our discourse is led by it away from the world in which things are felt and deeds are done, for in order to settle a dispute, define a term, and so forth, one is

21James, Pragmatism, p. 46.
advised to reflect or introspect on his own ideas. James wishes in effect to reverse this direction of thought, to conceive the process of clarification as one which conducts us, not inward upon our ideas, but outward, from our ideas toward objects and actions. Hence, ideas, in so far as they are meaningful, lead us back into the world. Somewhat as an electrical conductor conveys current to a working appliance, ideas convey our thought and activity into the world in order to do work there. Accordingly, meaning is not something occult but is concrete. It is to be found in and as a part of the world, for it consists in sensational and behavioral facts.

Furthermore, an ideational theory of meaning—if carried through consistently—requires that units of meaning, comprising, for example, every distinguishable sense of every meaningful word in a language, and certain ideas, or mental units, can be made to correspond isomorphically. But James denies that the required isomorphism in fact obtains. Regarding "the Sources of Error in Psychology," James claims that "the first of them Arises from the Misleading Influence of Speech." The passage continues in this way:

Language was originally made by men who were not psychologists, and most men today employ almost exclusively the vocabulary of outward things. . . . the objective sense is the original sense; and still to-day we have to describe a large number of sensations by the
name of the object from which they have most frequently been got. . . . This absence of a special vocabulary for subjective facts hinders the study of all but the very coarsest of them.23

Thus language often inclines the introspective observer to suppose incorrectly the presence or occurrence of an idea corresponding to a word, and conversely, to suppose that no idea is present or occurs when there is no corresponding word. And further, according to James, separations and connections in thought do not usually correspond with those found in language. Thus he states, for example, regarding the sentence 'Columbus discovered America in 1492':

The object of my thought in the previous sentence, for example, is strictly speaking neither Columbus, nor America, nor its discovery. It is nothing short of the entire sentence, 'Columbus-discovered-America-in-1492.'24

He continues in this vein, stating that:

The object of every thought, then, is neither more nor less than all that the thought thinks, exactly as the thought thinks it, however complicated the matter, and however symbolic the manner of the thinking may be. It is needless to say that memory can seldom accurately reproduce such an object, when once it has passed from before the mind. It either makes too little or too much of it. Its best plan is to repeat the verbal sentence, if there was one, in which the object was expressed. But for inarticulate thoughts there is not even this resource, and intro-

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24 Ibid., p. 275.
spection must confess that the task exceeds her powers. The mass of our thinking vanishes for ever, beyond hope of recovery, and psychology only gathers up a few of the crumbs that fall from the feast.25

Surely, if the nature of the subjective states accompanying one's use of one's language is so abstruse that it often escapes an introspective observer as qualified by talent and training as James, an ideational theory of meaning must be untenable.

ix

The sorts of concepts or locutions which are singled out by the application of James' pragmatic method as being 'meaningful' are thus those which entail something regarding both how one is to act and what one will experience, i.e., those which in some way entail both "sensations we are to expect"26 and "reactions we must prepare."27 As was stated above (see Section I, ii, of this chapter) James claims that his pragmatic method is designed to deal primarily with "metaphysical disputes."28 He, accordingly, devoted a lecture of his Pragmatism to making several applications of the method to "metaphysical

25Ibid., p. 276.
26James, Pragmatism, p. 43.
27Ibid.
28Ibid., p. 42.
It is thus to be asked as to whether or not and in what way these illustrations of his method corroborate and clarify what has above been claimed regarding the method and view of meaning it supposes.

James begins with "the problem of Substance." A fuller discussion of his treatment of the problem appears above (see Chapter I, Section I). The present discussion will be confined to James' conclusion: "Few things would seem to have fewer pragmatic consequences for us than substances." The notion of substance, as designating something more than "the fact of the bare cohesion itself" of "the phenomenal properties of things" or the "verifiable cohesions in our inner life" is pragmatically meaningless, for to assume something more in the way of an underlying substratum entails nothing either in the way of "sensations we are to expect" or "reactions we are to prepare."

James' treatment of the dispute between "theism

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29 Ibid., p. 65, from the title of Lecture Three.
30 Ibid., p. 65.
31 Ibid., p. 67.
32 Ibid., p. 66.
33 Ibid., p. 69.
34 Ibid., p. 43.
35 Ibid., p. 44.
and materialism"\textsuperscript{36} is more intricate, and more illuminating. Materialism holds that "the laws of physical nature are what run things," "explaining," as it does "higher phenomena by lower ones, and leaving the destinies of the world at the mercy of its blinder parts and forces."\textsuperscript{37} On the other hand, "Spiritualism says that mind not only witnesses and records things, but also runs and operates them: the world being thus guided, not by its lower, but by its higher elements."\textsuperscript{38}

It might be anticipated that James would maintain that materialism is pragmatically meaningless—and thus in this way resolve the dispute between it and theism and in favor of theism—in that materialism, as he maintains, entails, in effect, that one 'do nothing': "Anaesthesia is the watch word of the moral sceptic."\textsuperscript{39} Thus with regard to materialism he states that:

For materialism denies reality to the objects of almost all the impulses which we most cherish. The real meaning of the impulses, it says, is something which has no emotional interest for us whatever. . . . Any philosophy which annihilates the validity of the reference by explaining away its objects or translating them into terms of no emotional pertinency, leaves the mind with little

\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 69.  
\textsuperscript{37}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 69.  
\textsuperscript{38}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 70.  
\textsuperscript{39}James, \textit{Faith and Morals}, p. 107.
However, in this regard James maintains that optimism and pessimism are on the same footing, for to regard a future outcome of events as either impossible or inevitable tends in equal measure to annul the need and desire to act:

.. there are unhappy men who think the salvation of the world impossible. Theirs is the doctrine known as pessimism.

Optimism in turn would be the doctrine that thinks the world's salvation inevitable.

May not religious optimism be too idyllic? .. Doesn't the very 'seriousness' that we attribute to life mean that ineluctable noes and losses form a part of it ..

Furthermore, the central argument of James' "Will to Believe" requires that materialism and theism both be meaningful "hypotheses" in that the decision between them must be "a genuine option." Only "a genuine option .. is of the forced living, and momentous kind" and further: ".. deadness and liveness in an hypothesis are not intrinsic properties, but relations to the individual thinker. They are measured by his willingness

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40 Ibid., p. 83.
41 James, Pragmatism, p. 184.
42 Ibid., p. 190.
43 James, Faith and Morals, p. 34.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
James claims that materialism entails that mankind and his achievements will eventually and almost inevitably perish due to "the vast driftings of the cosmic weatherer"—being supplanted by yet another product of organic evolution on this planet, destroyed by the death of our solar system's sun, by the universe's 'running down' due to its ever increasing entropy, and so forth. James claims, on the other hand, that theism entails—in a word—"hope," or "promise":

Materialism means simply the denial that the moral order is eternal, and the cutting off of ultimate hopes; spiritualism means the affirmation of an eternal moral order and the letting loose of hope.  

. . . spiritualistic faith in all its forms deals with a world of promise, while materialism's sun sets in a sea of disappointment.

Theism thus entails that many moments in one's experience are genuine opportunities, that challenge and crisis are the occasion for actions which seek to realize one's deepest needs and most lofty aspirations and that an eventual outcome which is favorable to them is to be expected as well as sought. That is to say, it entails,

46 Ibid., pp. 34-35.
47 James, Pragmatism, p. 76.
48 Ibid., p. 77.
49 Ibid., p. 78.
though only quite generally, a way of acting and a future trend for experience.

It might appear that James means to say of this dispute that it is a disagreement in attitude only, that is, that 'matter' and 'spirit' differ in meaning only emotively. But this is not the case:

Treated as it often is, this question becomes little more than a conflict between aesthetic preferences. Matter is gross, coarse, crass, muddy; spirit is pure, elevated, noble; and since it is more consonant with the dignity of the universe to give the primacy in it to what appears superior, spirit must be affirmed as the ruling principle. To treat abstract principles as finalities, before which our intellects may come to rest in a state of admiring contemplation, is the great rationalist failing. Spiritualism, as often held, may be simply a state of admiration for one kind, and of dislike for another kind, of abstraction. I remember a worthy spiritualist professor who always referred to materialism as the 'mud-philosophy,' and deemed it thereby refuted.50

On the other hand, the difference between the two disputed views cannot be explicated in terms of two different sets of specifiable observations. James states, for example, that:

The issues of fact at stake in the debate are of course vaguely enough conceived by us at present. . . . The exact features of the saving future facts that our belief in God insures, will have to be ciphered out by the interminable methods of science; we can study our God only by studying his Creation. . . . The truth of 'God' has to run the gauntlet of all our other truths. It is on trial by them

50Ibid., p. 70.
and they on trial by it. Our final opinion about God can be settled only after all the truths have straightened themselves out together.51

"The exact features of the saving future facts" are not entailed by theism, but it does entail a certain kind of future, namely, one which is, by and large, congenial to human aims and interests. Furthermore, "we can enjoy our God, if we have one, in advance of all that labor."52 In other words, theism is a "working hypothesis"53 on which one can act now.

Thus theism does more than express a positive attitude regarding 'God,' or a certain kind of future, and the attitude expressed is active; theism entails something as to what we are to expect of the world and what we are to do there. Acting on the hypothesis (an "hypothesis" is "anything that may be proposed to our belief")54 amounts to assuming what James terms "the serious mood":55 "the willingness to live with energy, though energy bring pain."56 As theism entails "a world of promise"57 it

51Ibid., pp. 78-79.
52Ibid., p. 78.
53James, Faith and Morals, p. 95.
54Ibid., p. 33.
55Ibid., p. 12.
57James, Pragmatism, p. 78.
entails living 'seriously,' for "success depends on energy of act; energy again depends on faith that we shall not fail." In other words, acting in the light cast by theism means living with courage and by faith: "as the essence of courage is to stake one's life on a possibility, so the essence of faith is to believe that the possibility exists." ("Faith is synonymous with working hypothesis.")

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It is to be noted that given James' more general view of meaning (see above, Section I of this chapter, iii, and following) metaphysical claims do not differ greatly from more familiar or frequent forms of discourse regarding the world. In this regard, James differs from many other philosophers, philosophers as diverse as, for example, Kant and A. J. Ayer. According to James' view, metaphysical claims differ from most others essentially in their higher order of generality. Theism does not, in James' view, make some claim regarding the existence or nature of a spiritual order of reality, but rather—in so far as a claim is what is involved—one concerning the general character of the future of the empirical order.

58 James, FAITH and Morals, p. 100.
59 Ibid., p. 31.
60 Ibid., p. 95.
What is distinctive of metaphysical theories is (1) that they do not entail specific sensations, but rather, only general empirical features, and (2) that the general features of the future which they entail are to be what they are—in large part, though not entirely—indindependently of the consequences of human effort. For example, theism, or that the world is one of promise, is true or not—in part—independently of us, for the overall and eventual outcome of our future will be determined in part by factors over which we can exercise no strict control. Thus metaphysical claims obviously differ from claims which allow the accurate prediction of experience and the careful control of its conditions.

That our beliefs regarding the general character of the world and its future implicate our interest and effort James maintains in such passages as the following:

Cognition, in short, is incomplete until discharged in act; and although it is true that the later mental development, which attains its maximum through the hypertrophied cerebrum of man, gives birth to a vast amount of theoretic activity over and above that which is immediately ministerial to practice, yet the earlier claim is only postponed, not effaced, and the active nature asserts its rights to the end.

When the cosmos in its totality is the object offered to consciousness, the relation is in no whit altered. React on it we must in some congenial way.61

61 Ibid., p. 85.
Thus, assuming the dictum that 'ought' implies 'can,' and accordingly, that 'cannot' implies no 'ought,' James would not wish to maintain that the world's future is to be what it will be entirely independently of our actions, for to do so would surely eliminate an essential element of pragmatic meaning from metaphysical theories, viz., that of prescribing some mode of conduct. Thus regarding theism James states that:

I do not see why the very existence of an invisible world may not in part depend on the personal response which any one of us may make to the religious appeal.62

But since theism, for James, is essentially a view concerning the future of the empirical order and our active role in it, such a passage as the following might be more to the point:

The alternative between pragmatism and rationalism, in the shape in which we now have it before us, is no longer a question in the theory of knowledge, it concerns the structure of the universe itself.

On the pragmatist side we have only one edition of the universe, unfinished, growing in all sorts of places, especially in the places where thinking beings are at work.63

That is to say, the universe is 'in the making,' and consequently, we may be co-creators of the finished facts.

As seems implied by the above considerations, James

62 Ibid., p. 30.
63 James, *Pragmatism*, p. 168.
does not consider metaphysics to be the special province or prerogative of 'the metaphysician.' In other words, one is to regard as genuine and profound the introductory remarks of his *Pragmatism*, addressed to a general audience:

> I know that you, ladies and gentlemen, have a philosophy, each and all of you, and that the most interesting and important thing about you is the way in which it determines the perspective in your several worlds. You know the same of me ... 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. It is only partly got from books; it is our individual way of just seeing and feeling the total push and pressure of the cosmos.64

"Philosophy's results concern us all most vitally,"65 according to James, and a concern therefore, with metaphysical problems is only an extension or elevation of our concern to act so as to best realize our various aims.

One is easily induced to suppose that James wrote under two different hats, as it were, that his writings fall into one or the other of two categories, namely, that of serious philosophical essays and that of popular, even playful, essays "on faith and morals,"66 and to suppose further that his writings regarding metaphysical problems are of the former kind. But given his view of

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64Ibid., pp. 17-18.
65Ibid., p. 18.
66James, *Faith and Morals*, the phrase is taken from the title.
the nature of metaphysical problems the metaphysician's enterprise is largely homiletic. That is, it is his task to state the implications of metaphysical theories for expectation and conduct, or in other words, to translate the quasi-descriptive language in which traditional metaphysical theories are couched into the idiom of feeling and action. Thus James states that:

The whole function of philosophy ought to be to find out what definite difference it will make to you and me, at definite instants of our life, if this world-formula or that world-formula be the true one.67

Construed in this fashion James' treatment of such metaphysical theories as that of theism seems consistent with his radical empiricism. It is to be added to avoid misunderstanding that this use of 'metaphysics' differs somewhat from my use of the term in the foregoing discussion of his neutral monism as a metaphysical theory, a theory concerning the fundamental structure of the empirical order. The two uses of the term are, however, fundamentally similar in so far as James' neutral monism is also consistent with his radical empiricism, i.e., in that in neither sense of the term does metaphysics make claims regarding a supra-sensible order.

67 James, Pragmatism, p. 45.
Section II

Regarding James' theory of truth, his various statements of the theory—as has been made notorious by his critics—are colorful in their expression, but seemingly inconsistent in meaning. The clarification to follow is more a simplification of the problem than its full solution. Nonetheless, it should be adequate for the purpose of placing his theory of truth in relation to his pragmatism in general and his neutral monism. On the one hand, some of his statements of the theory seem to assert that a concept (or what a sentence says) is true if and only if it implies that certain sorts of sensations will occur (if certain conditions are fulfilled), and that such sensations do in fact occur (or would occur if the conditions were met). For example:

... eventually, all true processes must lead to the face of directly verifying sensible experiences somewhere, which somebody's ideas have copied.68

True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those that we can not. That is the practical difference it makes to us to have true ideas; that, therefore, is the meaning of truth, for it is all that is known-as.69

Our experience meanwhile is all shot through

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68 James, Pragmatism, p. 141.

69 Ibid., p. 133.
with regularities. One bit of it can warn us to get ready for another bit, can 'intend' or be 'significant of' that remoter object. The object's advent is the significance's verification. Truth, in these cases, meaning nothing but eventual verification, is manifestly incompatible with waywardness on our part. Woe to him whose beliefs play fast and loose with the order which realities follow in his experience; they will lead him nowhere or else make false connexions.\textsuperscript{70}

On the other hand, some of his statements seem to assert that a concept is true if and only if its being true—or its being believed to be true—would result in some human satisfaction. For example:

\textit{If theological ideas prove to have a value for concrete life, they will be true, for pragmatism, in the sense of being good for so much.}\textsuperscript{71}

\ldots truth is one species of good, and not, as is usually supposed, a category distinct from good, and co-ordinate with it. The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief, \ldots.}\textsuperscript{72}

\ldots an idea is 'true' so long as to believe it is profitable to our lives.\textsuperscript{73}

Again, other of his statements indicate that both of the above stated conditions must be met, that a concept is true if and only if it implies the occurrence of certain sorts of sensations which are such that they

\textsuperscript{70}Ibid., p. 136.
\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., p. 57.
\textsuperscript{72}Ibid., p. 59.
\textsuperscript{73}Ibid., pp. 58-59.
satisfy some desideratum, and that such sensations can be made to occur. For example:

... truth is what works best in the way of leading us, what fits every part of life best and combines with the collectivity of experience's demands, nothing being omitted.\textsuperscript{74}

Agreement thus turns out to be essentially an affair of leading--leading that is useful because it is into quarters that contain objects that are important.\textsuperscript{75}

True is the name for whatever idea starts the verification-process, useful is the name for its completed function in experience.\textsuperscript{76}

\section*{ii}

The first of the above interpretations of James' theory of truth is too stringent, too 'tough-minded' as it were. It has been argued at length that, according to James, thought and language in general are instruments for the realization of human aims and interests, and accordingly, that a considerable portion of our discourse about the world has assumed the nature of recipes, as it were, for the realization of specific aims and interests. In other words, this discourse serves to inform us regarding the empirical world, but a considerable portion of it does so--either overtly or covertly--in terms of the

\textsuperscript{74}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 61.
\textsuperscript{75}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 141.
\textsuperscript{76}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 135.
actions that these aims and interests require; that is, it serves to map-out, as it were, the topography of the empirical world but in terms of routes to desired ends, these routes being charted from, through, and to certain kinds of sensations. The thrust of James' view is that this basic pragmatic orientation has helped mold the world as we experience it and the structure of our thought and language about it. A world the character of which is independent of this pervasive and profound influence is 'a world of pure experience.' And much as pure experience as such is unintelligible, a 'pure' language in which human actions and their aims made no imprint would be unintelligible. (See above, Chapter II, Section II.)

The main implication of this view for a theory of truth is that—at least in many instances—to verify a proposition by obtaining confirmatory sensations is at the same time to gain some human satisfaction, and that the 'verifying' and 'satisfying' feature or function of those sensations cannot be clearly distinguished. It might be objected that this is a double-edged argument that cuts in two directions. On the one hand, if the 'verifying' and 'satisfying' aspects of the context in which the meanings of sentences are realized and by which they are recognized are distinguishable, they can be separated as
different kinds of meaning, for example, as cognitive and directive, respectively—which kinds of meaning James' theory of truth confounds. But on the other hand, if they cannot be so distinguished—as James argues—it can be argued that it is sufficient to discuss the truth-making factors involved solely in terms of those 'verifying' aspects of the context, for if those 'satisfying' aspects are inherent and inextricable, somewhat as the grain is to the wood, it is, in effect, 'taken into account' without being acknowledged by a theory of truth. However, such an approach is both theoretically and practically inadequate. A theory of truth should not only be or imply a workable criterion for recognizing true propositions but should also deepen and broaden our understanding of the nature of those propositions. Furthermore, in that we are beings oriented primarily to action in pursuit of aims—as James maintains—the 'satisfying' aspect of the context is that which is most salient, i.e., some satisfaction is what an experience or object tends to be 'known-as.'

Regarding those statements of James' theory of truth which are couched in terms of the second of the above interpretations (see Section I, i, of this chapter), they tend to be misleading and inappropriate, being, in
effect, too 'tender-minded.' It is essentially the same view of truth that finds expression in James' various formulations, these being more carelessly expressed than differently conceived. This group of statements tends to suggest that James maintains that purely subjective benefits which in some way result from having a belief can confirm its truth. For example, he might be presumed to maintain that the feeling of serenity and security which might accrue to one who believes theism to be true serves to confirm its truth. However, as argued above, theism implies—in the way of practical consequences—something to the effect that by acting so as to enhance the universe, to augment its total worth, our actions will, at least in the long run, meet with success. It is thus this eventual success—if it comes—that confirms a belief in theism, not some feeling of 'comfort' which the belief itself brings. James' pragmatism is indeed psychologically oriented, but in terms of behavior and its effects: "the ultimate test for us of what a truth means is indeed the conduct it dictates or inspires." 


78James, Essays and Reviews, p. 412.
A basic distinction for James is that between two fundamental ways of knowing: namely knowing by acquaintance and knowledge-about or knowledge of relations (see above, Chapter II, Section I, viii). Generally speaking, it can be said that James' neutral monism and pragmatism are, respectively, ramifications or refinements of these two conceptions of cognition. In knowing in the former of these two ways, the 'knowing' mental state and the portion of the physical world 'known' are numerically identical. In other words, what is thereby known is known as pure experience as such (see above, Chapter II, Section I, iv, and following). In knowing in the latter way, the 'knowing' mental state leads by continuous transitions (in virtue of which it is related to other mental states) to a mental state which is itself numerically identical with some portion of the physical world, that is, it terminates in a knowing of it by acquaintance. Thus to know is, for James, for a mental state to make connection with the physical world. For a concept 'to know' and for it 'to be true,' though they are not, for James, equivalent (the former being a broader notion of cognition) are surely such that a necessary condition for 'x being true of y' is that 'x know y,' in which case, a purely subjective satisfaction cannot be counted as confirming the truth of some concept.
It might also be presumed that James maintains that a belief is shown to be true to the extent that just any sensible satisfaction, rather than one of a more or less specifiable kind, accrues to the believer. But the satisfaction must be that which the concept in question implies and none other. Thus the meanings of such terms as 'successful,' 'good,' 'expedient,' and so forth, in the context of James' theory of truth, are relative to some fairly specific sort of desideratum, for to the extent that one's conception of this desideratum is vague, one's attempt to attain it will, generally speaking, be unsuccessful: "The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief, and good, too, for definite, assignable reasons." Therefore, a concept is of the nature of a recipe for the satisfaction of some definite desideratum, and accordingly, its truth is confirmed to the extent that it is a successful recipe, i.e., to the extent that it does in fact indicate just how and when to act so as to achieve that specific sort of satisfaction. James' view is complicated but not contradicted by what he states regarding metaphysical problems. Theism, for example, implies that a world which accommodates or accomplishes human aims is in the making. Thus, though

79 See, for example, Russell, Philosophical Essays, p. 118.

80 James, Pragmatism, p. 59.
the satisfactions implied are many, because they are many, not just any satisfaction serves to confirm theism. Only a future world which satisfies all of these specific demands, will serve to confirm it:

Our final opinion about God can be settled only after all the truths have straightened themselves out together.81

It might also be supposed that truth for James is 'man made' in some sense such that it is the result of our fiat.82 Truth is relative to human purposes and pursuits because--but not in the same sense that--meaning is. What we think and say of our world is conditioned in a fundamental way by "our passional and volitional nature,"83 by the fact that we are active and appetitive beings. However, that what we think and say is true--when it is true--is, in the last analysis, determined by the nature of physical reality. In other words, though we reconstruct the world as it is given as pure experience by our intelligence and for the sake of our fundamental aims, the reconstruction results from a mutual adaptation between the originally given order and our aims, i.e., the originally given order remains to the extent that we

81Ibid., p. 79.
83James, Faith and Morals, p. 35.
must take account of its connections in terms of the consequences of our actions. James indeed claims that, "Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true. . . ." But he adds "... by events." Its verity is in fact an event, a process: the process namely of its verifying itself, its verifi- cation."84 (See above, Chapter II, Section III, iii, and Chapter III, Section II, iii.)

iv

An important consideration as to why a too 'tender-minded' view of truth is often attributed to James is that his readers—and also James himself—tend to confound what might be termed 'a criterion of truth' and 'an ethics of belief.'85 James, in many of his essays, is more concerned with the problem implied by the latter phrase, and perceives that his view of truth has as an implication the necessity of coming to terms with such a problem. (For example, the former of these problems is considered with respect to theism in the lecture in Pragmatism discussed above; the "The Will to Believe," on the other hand, deals primarily with the latter problem

84 James, Pragmatism, p. 133.
85 The phrase 'ethics of belief' is also used regarding this aspect of James' thought by Nakhnikian, An Introduction to Philosophy, p. 278 ff.
with respect to theism, being, "an essay in justification of faith"\textsuperscript{86}).

James' view of truth implies that no one can ever be certain of any truth (in so far as his pragmatism applies), for its complete confirmation (or confutation) is always contingent upon future experiential consequences. (Since 'concepts' have been described as rules, recipes, procedures, and the like, for gaining certain satisfactions, James' pragmatism is obviously not intended as applying to such sentences as 'It will rain here today! This sentence is confirmed or confuted once and for all by the observed state of the weather on that day. A rule or recipe (of any sort), however, applies to an indefinite number of future instances.) Further, according to James, novel experiences of unspeciable sorts are to be expected in due course, and therefore even the most well-founded (by confirming experiences) beliefs—depending upon in what quarters this novelty will emerge—may eventually be confuted. Thus he states that:

Ptolemaic astronomy, euclidean space, aristotelian logic, scholastic metaphysics, were expedient for centuries, but human experience has boiled over those limits, and we now call these things only relatively true, or true within those borders of experience. 'Absolutely' they are false; for we know that those limits were casual, and might have been transcended by past theorists

\textsuperscript{86}James, \textit{Faith and Morals}, p. 32.
just as they are by present thinkers. 87

This raises the question of what one ought to believe, what one has the 'right' to believe, since beliefs cannot be founded on conclusive evidence. What might seem the most reasonable answer is to the effect that one should adopt a certain belief if and only if there is more evidence confirming it than there is evidence confuting it, and that the 'strength' of one's belief should be in proportion to the balance of confirming evidence. James maintains however, that in many instances, and especially in those of the kind that he terms 'metaphysical,' such an approach is 'irrational.' 88 It would be inappropriate here to attempt to pursue Ariadne's thread through the labyrinth of the arguments of such an essay as "The Will to Believe." It will perhaps suffice to briefly indicate the nature of the problem, and thereby, the distinction between 'a criterion of truth' and 'an ethics of belief.'

There are many occasions in the life of a person who desires to be both intellectually and morally responsible in which that person, after considering what he conceives to be all of the available evidence regarding some dispute,

87James, Pragmatism, pp. 145-46.

88This term is adopted from the title of James' essay, "The Sentiment of Rationality."
is unable to determine on which side of the scales, as it were, the most evidence is weighed. Yet, for both logical and moral reasons the person is compelled to come to some decision, to take sides, as it were. The situation is, for example, such that there is no way of not choosing, or finding yet another alternative from which to choose, and the decision is considered to be one of great consequence. The choice involved may be that as to whether or not to live a religious life, as seems the case with James, or a more timely example might be that as to whether or not and in what way to become actively involved with regard to the major contemporary social and political issues (for many persons today, the question as to whether or not to become religious is not a genuine option simply because it is not a 'living option'). In any case, such situations present what James terms "a genuine option" and describes as follows:

. . . a genuine option . . . is of the forced, living, and momentous kind.

1. A living option is one in which both hypotheses are live ones. If I say to you: "Be a theosophist or be a Mohammedan," it is probably a dead option, because for you neither hypothesis is likely to be alive. But if I say: "Be an agnostic or be a Christian," it is otherwise: trained as you are, each hypothesis makes some appeal, however small, to your belief.

2. Next, if I say to you: "Choose between going out with your umbrella or without it," I do not offer you a genuine option, for it is
not forced. You can easily avoid it by not going out at all. . . . Every dilemma based on a complete logical disjunction, with no possibility of not choosing, is an option of this forced kind.

3. Finally, if I were Dr. Nansen and proposed to you to join my North Pole expedition, your option would be momentous; for this would probably be your only similar opportunity, and your choice now would either exclude you from the North Pole sort of immortality altogether or put at least the chance of it into your hands. He who refuses to embrace a unique opportunity loses the prize as surely as if he tried and failed.

Thus it can be concluded with some confidence that James adopts the third of the alternatives distinguished above (see Section I, i, of this chapter).

Yet there are further, and indeed many, difficulties surrounding James' theory of truth. Only one of these, however, will be considered, namely: the distinction—which James tends to obscure—between the consequences of a proposition's being true and the consequences of one's believing a proposition to be true. It appears to be James' view that, (1) one must ordinarily act in some fairly specifiable way in order to obtain the satisfaction implied by a proposition's being true; that

89 James, *Faith and Morals*, pp. 34-35.
90 Compare the following, for example, with Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Thirteen Pragmatisms and Other Essays* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), p. 6 ff.
is, in most cases, if not all, a proposition's being true together with some response on the part of an active observer causally implies the occurrence of certain sorts of sensations; and (2) one's believing a proposition to be true ordinarily implies that one act in a certain sort of way, and in such a way as to seek the satisfaction implied by the proposition's being true. Thus, at least in many instances, the consequences implied by a proposition's being true coincide with those which accrue to one who believes it to be true, which actions, sooner or later and in greater or lesser degree, serve to confirm or confute it by being fulfilled or frustrated in their purpose.

The first of the above two claims would seem to be implied by James' pragmatism but not the second. It may, however, follow from other of his views. One's believing a proposition to be true may, ordinarily or always, causally imply some action or other. This is at least a principle of James: "no mental modification ever occurs which is not accompanied or followed by a bodily change."\(^9\) One's behavior, by and large, reflects one's beliefs, but it is perhaps doubtful that one always acts in accord with what one believes will gain some desired end. But again, this view is perhaps implied by James' principles: "the mind" is "essentially a teleological

\(^9\) James, Principles of Psychology, I, 5.
mechanism" . . . "the conceiving or theorizing faculty
. . . functions exclusively for the sake of ends . . .
set by our emotional and practical subjectivity alto-
gether." James, for example, might want to maintain
that if one does not act in accord with his (honestly)
professed beliefs, one must be mistaken regarding what
those beliefs are.

But a more serious objection, that is, in the sense
that it apparently cannot be answered by James in terms of
his own views, is the following. Given James' general
view of meaning, sentences—in so far as his pragmatic view
applies to them—must in effect indicate not only how and
when one is to act in order to gain certain kinds of satis-
factions, but also it must be added, how and when one is
to act so as to avoid certain kinds of undesired conse-
quencies. This is simply the other side of the pragmatic
coin. But in cases where a belief concerns what is to be
avoided, one's acting on that belief, that is, acting so as
to avoid something, does not tend to confirm or confute the
belief. For example, if I believe that a snake, having a
certain sort of coloration and markings, which I sometimes
see while walking in the woods is venomous, I will avoid
it (by walking with care while in the woods, by not walking
in the woods at all, and so forth) in order to avoid being

92James, Faith and Morals, p. 117.
bitten by it. Thus the expected consequence of my behavior is that I shall never discover from my own experience whether or not what I believe is true. In more general terms, when the proposition indicates how to avoid what is undesirable, rather than how to attain a desired end, the consequences of believing it do not at all tend to coincide with those implied by its being true. It is precisely in such instances of these that to talk of truth in terms of what 'works,' what is 'expedient,' and so forth, is misleading. It 'works' to believe that the snake is venomous, for my believing thus, and acting accordingly, keeps me out of harm's way. But my belief, if untrue, causes me to remain ignorant of the truth.

Thus the pragmatic attitude seems to stand in contrast to what might be termed 'the scientific attitude.' James states, for example:

Belief and doubt are living attitudes, and involve conduct on our part. Our only way, for example, of doubting, or refusing to believe, that a certain thing is, is continuing to act as if it were not.93

In contrast, the scrupulous scientist more often acts on his doubts than on his beliefs. He acts as if (by some experimental procedure) they are true and in order to make trial of their truth. The pragmatic attitude if allowed sovereignty over the intellect can be an ally of

93Ibid., p. 24.
superstition rather than science—it might be surmised, for example, that a belief in ghosts was entertained by so many persons for so long a time simply because—in acting on that belief—they never ventured into a cemetery after dark. But in James' behalf it is to be recalled that the focus of his pragmatism is 'metaphysical disputes.' And in this region of inquiry perhaps the more relevant question is: what course of conduct in this world do my beliefs require of me?

Section III

The preceding sections of this chapter have been little more than an attempt to set forth James' pragmatism. In this section the endeavor will be made to set his pragmatism in relation to his neutral monism. It is to be recalled that two interpretations of James' notion of 'pure experience' were distinguished and discussed above (see Chapter II, Section III). These were distinguished as an ontological notion, and one that is essentially psychological. Both of these notions, as has been argued, are to be attributed to James, and this can be done without inconsistency; that is, though James tends to confound them, they are distinguishable and in such a way as to be consistent. It was also observed that the ontological notion plays the more important role in James'
neutral monism, and the psychological notion in his pragmatism. However, both notions have some bearing on James' pragmatism. Consequently, the delineation of some of the relations between James' neutral monism and his pragmatism will be done for each of the two notions of pure experience in turn.

As the designatum of a psychological notion, namely, a mode of experience in which perception and conception, meaning and truth, and various other aspects of human mentality have their foundation but which as such is 'pure' or unalloyed with respect to them, pure experience--though lacking nothing in the way of richness and reality--is chaotic and unintelligible. That is to say, the domains of what is meaningful, what is true, and what belongs to the physical world, have yet to be determined. This intelligibility comes only with the reconstruction of pure experience in accord with human pursuits and purposes. We reorder pure experience, that is, come to experience, as well as think and discourse about our experience, by means of concepts, these concepts being of the nature of rules or recipes for attaining various sorts of satisfactions.

The resulting reconstruction is an adaptation of the originally given order. An order of some sort is inherent
in pure experience and is never completely superseded; consequently, a kind of unwrought, obstinate 'reality' remains to the end. Though transformed by our concepts, pure experience is something of which we must take account. Our concepts, in turn, cannot be completely extricated from the flux of pure experience, on pain of becoming meaningless or false. Thus in eliciting or elucidating the meaning of a concept we must determine what it tells as to how and when to act—by means of what actions regarding what sensations—so as to attain some aim. If we are correctly informed as to how and when to act, that is, if when we so act we succeed in attaining the end for the attainment of which the concept is designed, its truth is confirmed. If it fails in its design, it is, on the other hand, confuted.

(Psychological) pure experience was described and distinguished from (ontological) pure experience as a mode of experience which is antecedent to the introduction and influence of concepts (as what is merely 'given' as opposed to what is in some sense 'given' to, or applied to, it). This experience is 'pure' in the sense that it is without a conceptual component and in that it is, therefore, relatively chaotic or formless in character. Thus it is not easily supposed that concepts originate in or from this pure experience, after the fashion, as it
were, of 'copies' of original experiences. Rather, pure experience is more aptly conceived as of the nature of an unshewn stuff or material. This material must first be fashioned, as it were, the chaos must be ordered, which is the function of concepts. Consequently, corresponding to the supposition that experience is 'pure' is the supposition that concepts are prospective (i.e., James' empiricism is normative rather than genetic in orientation). We order experience by applying concepts to it, which involves a cooperation between future experience and action. Thus in inquiring after the meaning of a concept the crucial question is not that of in what sort of experience it originates, but: what sort of future experiences and actions does it imply?

As has been stated, the result of the mutual adaptation of our basic human interests and the given order of experience is something like so many recipes for realizing these interests in and through experience. Viewed as being of the nature of plans, procedures, recipes, and so forth (rather than simply reports, descriptions, and so forth, of sense-experience) it is in a

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94 The view alluded to here is essentially that of classical empiricism. See, for example, Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*, Book I, Part I.

sense more appropriate to speak of a concept's being shown to be true in so far as it 'works,' rather than, in so far as it is verified. In other words, the idiom of practical utility rather than experimental verification is most to the point. It should thus be evident that James' (psychological) notion of pure experience, that is, his distinction between experience as 'pure' and as ordered and intelligible, underlies and upholds his pragmatism. That is, if the view be entertained that experience as it ordinarily occurs in the form in which we apprehend it consciously and intelligently, is the result of its reconstruction according to various human aims and the means to their attainment, it is plausible to suppose further that meaning and truth are to be defined in pragmatic terms.

In effect, James makes a sharp distinction between truth and reality. Truth is not simply what corresponds in some direct way to reality. Pure experience is apparently reality in the best sense of the word for James: "only in such experience ["immediate perceptual experience"] is reality intimately and concretely found." However, truth—pragmatically conceived—pertains to our dealings with a world (or, our thought and language dealing with that world) which, in a sense, has been 'made

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96 James, Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 96.
over' to suit our purposes. Reality, as pure experience, is incorporated into that world but it is encountered there as what helps or hinders us in the way of brute fact: "anything is real of which we find ourselves obliged to take account in any way." 97

Stated somewhat differently James draws a sharp distinction between two ways of knowing, namely, knowledge of acquaintance and knowledge-about or knowledge of relations. With regard to the first, the knowledge is of reality, and also, the act or occasion of knowing is numerically identical with the reality which it knows. 'Truth,' in this case--if it is appropriate to use the term at all--is synonymous with sense-experience, or at least, veridical sense-experience. Truth--as pragmatically conceived--pertains to knowledge of relations. When a concept is said 'to know' or 'be true of' something or other, there is no reality to which it corresponds in any strict sense. Rather, the concept prescribes a procedure for reaching some desired destination, and we encounter reality along the way, so to speak, in the guise of instruments for, and obstacles to, our progress, and so forth. To seek here for a 'corresponding reality' is an error somewhat analogous to taking a tour through London, for example, and at the end of the trip to say: 'I've seen

97 Ibid., p. 101.
Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square, and all the rest . . . but where is London?'

iii

As the designatum of an ontological notion, pure experience is the "one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything"—be it mental and/or physical in nature—"is composed." As such, that is as that "primal stuff or material," pure experience is neither mental nor physical. The mental and physical, on the other hand, are such in virtue of their external relations, "it is an affair of relations, it falls outside, not inside, the single experience considered." Depending on the character of the relations in which a portion of pure experience appears as a term, the relation is mental or physical in character, i.e., is constitutive of some mind, on the one hand, or, on the other, of the physical world.

The phrase 'pure experience' is perhaps misleading in that, as ontological, pure experience is the "stuff or material" of both experience—both as psychologically 'pure' and reconstructed—and physical reality. Yet the use of the phrase underscores the supposition that pure

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98 James, Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 4.
99 Ibid., p. 10.
experience is the very same "stuff or material" of which experience is composed. Our experience and the external, physical world are not distinct worlds, but nexuses within a single world, "a world of pure experience."\(^{100}\)

This summary statement of James' ontological neutral monism points us in the general direction of his pragmatism. In experience there is no numerical distinction between the knowing of an entity and the entity known, i.e., within the experience itself there is no separation between the mind and its world. Thus to cognize that world is to be in its midst, so to speak, and not a by-stander. Experience is thus something lived, and that which is lived through is also reacted to. My reactions in the presence of an object or event and the sensations I have from it are inseparable in the sense that they are constitutive of an experienced whole; the former does not belong to me, and the latter to the object or event, rather—both belong to the total experience. If, for example, I am in a building that catches fire I perhaps smell smoke, see flames, feel the temperature of the air about me rise, run for an exit or fire extinguisher, and so forth. But it is only in retrospect that I dis-

\(^{100}\) The title of the second essay in James' Essays In Radical Empiricism.
tistinguish what I sensed, thought, and did. The experience itself includes all of these things; they are only later classified as sensations or reactions. Though in and of itself a portion of pure experience is 'neutral,' neither of the mental nor physical world, where it occurs as someone's experience its context is that of realities encountered and deeds done, as well as that person's consciousness.

Thus a view of meaning which simply identifies the meaning of a concept with the object or event to which it refers involves a partial or 'abstract' view. The context of the object—and apart from its context it is not a physical entity but simply a portion of pure experience—identifies it both with respect to the physical world cognized and the subject which cognizes it. In like measure, an ideational theory is rendered implausible. The context in which an experienced object is situated is essentially a cluster of relations. Again, a concept has such a context, relations which connect it through actions and experiences to an external, objective reality.

In that his neutral monism is monistic rather than dualistic, it precludes, or at least renders implausible, some sort of correspondence view of the nature of truth. Mind is not distinguishable as a stuff in which an external world is reflected or reproduced (see above, Chapter I,
Section IV), as the stuff of both mind and the physical world is the same. And in that the mental and physical differ with regard to their relations, neither can they correspond with regard to their structure (see above, Chapter III, Section II). In that James' neutral monism is 'neutral,' rather than idealistic, it also tends to preclude a coherence view. The various ways in which pure experience is related such that mental relata result, and thus the manner in which ideas might mutually 'cohere' as part of some conceptual scheme, fails to encompass all of reality, for pure experience is also related in yet different ways, namely, in such ways as to constitute the physical world. In short, the kind of monism required by a coherence view of truth is of a different sort than James' neutral monism (see above, Chapter II, Section III, and Chapter I, IV).

But it might well be asked: Even if it is to be granted that James' neutral monism points away from, as it were, traditional views of meaning and truth, in what way does it point toward James' pragmatism, rather than some other unprecedented view? An answer can be given in terms of what James claims as to the nature of those respective kinds of relations which, according to his ontological neutral monism, account for the distinction
between the mental and physical orders (see above, Chapter III, Section II, ii).

He claims that as part of the physical world a portion of pure experience is 'strong,' 'active,' 'energetic.' Its relations are to be conceived in terms of 'what it does' or 'how it behaves.' In short, it is the causal efficacy of certain portions of pure experience in virtue of which they participate in the physical order. On the other hand, it is the continuity of portions of pure experience in virtue of which they are mental states; that is, they are characteristically so related as to give rise to a passage, perpetuation, and progression. Physical entities are those which are creative of consequences, and mental entities are those which 'tend' or 'lead' to others.

Accordingly, a mind or mental process 'knows' a physical reality (when it 'knows' it conceptually or representatively rather than by acquaintance) when an idea 'tends' or 'leads' to certain sorts of experiential consequences. That is to say, what is thereby known is a physical fact, in that it is related to another by being its consequence or effect (and in virtue of being thus related both 'facts' are physical), and the knowing of it is a mental process in that it is one which is continuous and progressive (and in virtue of this relation
the components of the process are mental states).

A substantive conscious state which is also numerically identical with some portion of the physical world is what James ordinarily designates 'a percept.' Such is the case with knowledge of acquaintance, where what is known is simultaneously a relatum in relations of two sorts (those of the one sort being that in virtue of which the relatum is mental, and those of the other, that in virtue of which it is physical). On the other hand, a substantive conscious state which is not also numerically identical with some physical entity is what James designates 'a concept' (at least in one sense in which he uses the term) (see above, Chapter III, Section III, i). It is in essentially the same sense of the term 'concept,' but now in a different context, that James discusses the meaning of, and the truth or falsity of, a concept. When a concept 'tends' or 'leads' to some other mental state it can be said to know or represent it; and when that to which it eventually 'tends' is also numerically identical with some portion of the physical world, the concept can be said to know that portion of the physical world, knowing it representatively or conceptually (see above, Chapter III, Section III, v).

Corresponding—at least in an approximate way—in the mental stream to the meaning of the concept is the
'feeling of tendency' which accompanies it (occurring in the fringe of the conscious state and as a sense of its relations to other conscious states):

The sense of our meaning is an entirely peculiar element of the thought. It is one of those evanescent and 'transitive' facts of mind which . . . pertains to the 'fringe' of the subjective state, and is a 'feeling of tendency.' . . .

Corresponding, on the other hand, in the physical world to the concept's meaning is a sequence of actions of a certain sort in response to the concept and certain sorts of sensations, and aiming at some sensible satisfaction:

For the important thing about a train of thought is its conclusion. That is the Meaning, or, as we say, the topic of the thought.

When the concept is accompanied by a 'feeling of tendency,' that is, when the concept 'tends' to actions directed at some experiencable end, it can be said to be (pragmatically) meaningful. These actions, with their sensible occasions, accompaniments, and aim, can be said to be the concept's meaning. And when the concept's 'tendency' can be fully realized, that is, when it unfolds in actions which are fulfilled in their aim, the concept can be said to be confirmed. When, on the other hand,

101 James, The Principles of Psychology, I, 472.
102 Ibid., p. 260.
this process of "agreeable leading"\textsuperscript{103} is frustrated along the way, when it fails to finally reach its aim, the concept is confuted. Accordingly, James states that:

\[ \ldots \text{'truth' in our ideas and beliefs means} \]
\[ \ldots \text{that ideas (which themselves are but parts of our experience) become true just in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relations with other parts of our experience, to summarize them and get about among them by conceptual short-cuts instead of following the interminable succession of particular phenomena}. \textsuperscript{104} \]

Thus James, appropriately and with some precision, can write of a concept's being confirmed in so far as it 'works.' A true concept, according to James' view, is essentially a 'tendency' of thought and a disposition to behave which prompts a progression of concepts (substantive and transitive states) in a stream of thought and actions and percepts in the physical world which 'tends to' and finally terminates in some percept which comes (at least in part) as the consequence of those actions. Thus the meaning and/or truth of some concept does not consist in some 'fact' in the physical world which the concept or the transition in thought from it to its termination 'copies.' The transition does not 'copy' the causal relations between physical facts, nor does the concept

\textsuperscript{103}James, \textit{Pragmatism}, p. 134.
\textsuperscript{104}Ibid., p. 49.
'copy' their effects (see above, Chapter III, Section II, vi). Rather, the concept 'knows' some physical fact when by acting at its direction we are able to come to know it by acquaintance, whereby our consciousness and it are numerically one.

The concept's meaning thus lies in our 'doing' and its truth in our 'success': the concept is confirmed—not by 'copying' what it knows representatively—but by its 'success' in actually bringing one into possession of what it knows. Here one stands at the crossroads, as it were, of James' pragmatism and radical empiricism. A satisfaction to be attained must be owned, be immediately experienced (rather than 'wished for' in some way); and reality to be known—in what is for James the most genuine sense of the term—must also be immediately experienced (rather than 'thought of' or conceived). It is when cognition serves this dual purpose that it fulfills in function in the fullest sense. James asserts that:

Made of percepts, or distilled from parts of percepts, their [concepts] essential office, it has been said, is to coalesce with percepts again, bringing the mind back into the perceptual world with a better command of the situation there.105

On the one hand, James' view of meaning and that of

105 James, Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 57.
truth, and on the other, his two notions of pure experience have been distinguished. Something like the following relationship appears to obtain among these four elements of James' philosophy. The psychological notion of pure experience abstracts, as it were, pure experience from the conceptual scheme in which we, in effect, place it; the ontological notion abstracts pure experience from the ontological scheme as described by James' neutral monism. We reconstruct the given order of experience in accord with our conceptual scheme. Accordingly, we are able to an extent to conceive reality's items in different arrangements, other than they are given. Hence, our concept is meaningful, roughly, so long as it involves some ordering of these items. That is, it need not be 'truly conceived' but must be concretely conceived, we must offer an answer to the question: "What experiences [may] be different from those which would obtain if the belief were false?" But to be true our concept must conform to the ontological scheme. The difference in our experience which the concept implies must in fact obtain, for "True ideas are those we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify." These 'sensible consequences' are part of the ontological scheme for they are among

107 Ibid., v-vi.
those relations in virtue of which portions of pure experience are part of the physical world, i.e., this order, or these relations, is given, along with the portions of pure experience which are thusly related, and are thus physically real as well as concretely conceivable. 108

It might be surmised that the two phases or facets of James' career for which he is best remembered, namely, his being a turn-of-the-century psychologist and a champion of the pragmatist movement, reflect something of the philosophical motive behind his preoccupation in later life with a theory of neutral monism. As a psychologist accepting and employing the method of introspection James must have retained a respect for the data or 'facts' of consciousness, and as pragmatist, came to acknowledge the value of verifying what we think and say vis-a-vis the 'hard facts' of physical reality. And most of all, as a philosopher he must have felt the need to reconcile these two influences on his thought and vocation.

Correspondingly, James' neutral monism is essentially a philosophical endeavor to view consciousness and the physical world in some intimate connection yet not in such a way as to deny the rights of either. Thus, on the one hand, there are for James mental states, entities, or events (though they are mental solely in virtue of relations they happen to have). Consciousness, in other words, has an ontological status. Thus James' position...
is distinct from any sort of metaphysical behaviorism.

He must affirm rather than disclaim that:

There are two different kinds of existence or status. What exists or happens may have the status of physical existence, or it may have the status of mental existence.¹

On the other hand, according to James' position, there is a physical world the reality of which, as physical, is irreducible. Yet undiscovered stars and other physical realities may conceivably occur outside of any consciousness (though, as portions of pure experience, the same 'stuff' as that of consciousness, none of these are unknowable). Thus James must disclaim every form of metaphysical idealism, any view which maintains that:

We perceive, on reflection, that to be real, or even barely to exist, must be to fall within sentience. Sentient experience, in short, is reality, and what is not this is not real. We may say, in other words, that there is no being or fact outside of that which is commonly called psychical existence.²

Yet the mental and physical domains are in intimate connection. The ultimate portions of reality are not differentiated as mental and physical, and in cognition consciousness gains intimate access to the physical world, being either numerically identical with some portion of

²Bradley, Appearance and Reality, p. 127.
the latter (where knowing is acquaintance) or having continuous connections with it (where knowing is representation).

In this paper the attempt has been made to present James' neutral monism so as to cohere with other aspects of his thought, for example, his empiricism and pluralism. Some special attention has been given to the relationship between his neutral monism and his pragmatism, the result of which has been to perceive several points of contact and confluence. Viewed with its affinities with his neutral monism, James' pragmatism is rendered somewhat more clear or cogent in at least one respect. Every theory of meaning and truth is confronted by a difficult dilemma. Stated in a very general and emphatic way this dilemma is that, on the one hand, 'meaning' and 'truth' are terms which apparently properly apply to something which the mind brings to the physical world and is not found there, that is, they in some sense seem to apply to such things as ideas, concepts, and so forth; and, on the other hand, 'meaning' and 'truth' apparently apply in some sense to the physical world, in that most, if not, ultimately, all, of our concepts are 'of' or 'about' that world, and also apply in that world, in that they can be applied only in the light of public criteria. Cartesian dualism and materialistic behaviorism are familiar, though,
it would seem, unsuccessful, responses to this fundamental difficulty.

If James' neutral monism is a tenable position, and if it has such relations to his pragmatism as those indicated above, James is in a position to deal with this dilemma. It was argued above (see Chapter III, Section III, v) that the process or procedure whereby a concept is confirmed or confuted is one which is both part of a stream of thought and also part of the physical world. Percepts compose that stream of thought, and as percepts, belong to both the conscious stream and an environing physical world. As they are woven, as it were, into the stream of thought by continuous relations, they are mental states, and in that they are related spatially and 'energetically' to other portions of reality, they are physical facts. Thus, as in knowing by acquaintance, but in a more involved manner, the sorts of situations in which the meanings and truth or falsity of concepts is exhibited participate in both the mental and physical orders. It is concepts to which such terms as 'meaning,' 'true,' and 'false' apply. But their meaning resides in their associated 'tendencies' which are realized both as a progression of thought and a succession of actions and percepts. These percepts are what the concepts are 'of' or 'about,' and our actions place us in their midst.
Thus, roughly speaking, a concept (which initiates the progression of thought and action) is 'in the mind,' the actions and percepts which insue are 'in the world,' and our actions exhibit the concept's meaning and the nature of the world confirms or confutes it. That is to say, placed against the background of his neutral monism, James can rightfully assert of his pragmatism that:

It converts the absolutely empty notion of a static relation of 'correspondence' (what that may mean we must ask later) between our minds and reality, into that of a rich and active commerce (that any one may follow in detail and understand) between particular thoughts of ours, and the great universe of other experiences in which they play their parts and have their uses.3

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3James, Pragmatism, p. 55.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


