Wittgenstein and William James

Russell B. Goodman

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In this study, Russell Goodman explores Wittgenstein's long engagement with the work of the pragmatist William James. He argues that James exerted a distinctive and pervasive positive influence on Wittgenstein's thought. The book details the commitments of these two philosophers to concrete human experience, the priority of practice over intellect, and the importance of religion in understanding human life.

Tracing in detail what Wittgenstein learned from *The Principles of Psychology* and *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* the author provides considerable support for Wittgenstein's claim that he is saying "something that sounds like pragmatism." Goodman finds that Wittgenstein displays a pragmatist philosophical persona – attuned to the human interests served by our theorizing, flexible enough to move on without having every question answered.

This provocative account of the convergence in thinking of two major philosophers usually seen as members of discrete traditions will be welcomed by students of Wittgenstein, William James, pragmatism, and the history of twentieth-century philosophy.

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For Anne

"The books of all the great philosophers are like so many men. Our sense of an essential personal flavor in each one of them, typical but indescribable, is the finest fruit of our own accomplished philosophic education."

William James (P, 24)

"The difficulty is to know one's way about among the concepts of 'psychological phenomena'. . . . one has got to master the kinships and differences of the concepts. As someone is master of the transition from any key to any other one, modulates from one to the other."

Ludwig Wittgenstein (RPP, 1054)

"Concepts lead us to make investigations; are the expression of our interest, and direct our interest."

Wittgenstein (PI, 570)

". . . the world can be handled according to many systems of ideas, and is so handled by different men, and will each time give some characteristic kind of profit, for which he cares, to the handler, while at the same time some other kind of profit has to be omitted or postponed. . . . science and . . . religion are both of them genuine keys for unlocking the world's treasure-house to him who can use either of them practically."

William James (VRE, 116)

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Preface

I first began to think about James and Wittgenstein while working through the *Wittgenstein Workbook* published in 1970 by Christopher Coope, Peter Geach, Timothy Potts, and Roger White.[1] Near the end of this slim but useful volume is a one-page list of parallel passages from James's *The Principles of Psychology* and Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations.* Over the years, as I discussed the readings from this list in seminars, I learned to free myself from the view of the relationship between Wittgenstein and James that was enunciated by the authors of the *Workbook* – and many others. For according to this "received view," James was important for Wittgenstein primarily because he committed, in a clear, exemplary manner, fundamental errors in the philosophy of mind.[2] I found that although Wittgenstein did find such errors in *The Principles of Psychology*, he loved William James, both as a personality in his own writings and as a philosopher. I learned that *The Principles* and *The Varieties of Religious Experience* exerted a vast *positive* influence on Wittgenstein's philosophy, early and late.

In 1990, on a trip to Cambridge sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, I discussed Wittgenstein and James with Geach and Elizabeth Anscombe, both of whom attended Wittgenstein's classes in the late 1940s. Wittgenstein considered using James's *Principles* as a text for these classes, and the published notes by his students, including Geach, show that it was a main object of study. When I asked Professor Anscombe if Wittgenstein had ever referred to other texts of James in his lectures or conversations, particularly

Pragmatism, she uttered a statement that haunted me for years: not only had Wittgenstein not read *Pragmatism*, she told me vehemently; but if he *had* read it, he would have hated it.

The *Wittgenstein Workbook* makes no mention of Wittgenstein's ambiguous relation to pragmatism. This topic was first treated at some length in Robin Haack's 1982 paper "Wittgenstein and Pragmatism."[3] It was raised in a previous paper, "Must We Mean What We Say?" (1958), by Stanley Cavell, whose remarks about pragmatism I consider in Chapters 1 and 6. However, the earliest commentator on Wittgenstein's relation to pragmatism is Wittgenstein himself. Twice in writings from the last four years of his life he considers, uneasily, his own relation to pragmatism. I begin with one of these occasions in Chapter 1, and I consider the second in Chapter 6. These chapters on pragmatism frame the book's interior chapters on Wittgenstein's readings of James's *Principles of Psychology* and *Varieties of Religious Experience.* The question of Wittgenstein's pragmatism cannot be adequately considered without an assessment of his relationship to James; and an assessment of his relation to James requires an assessment of his relation to pragmatism.

I am especially indebted to William C. Dowling and Richard Gale for advice and commentary on the manuscript of *Wittgenstein and William James.* I also received helpful comments from Steven Affeldt, Thomas Alexander, Tom Burke, John Bussanich, Stanley Cavell, James Conant, Linda Dowling, David Dunaway, Timothy Gould, Susan Haack, Barbara Hannan, Larry Hickman, Christopher Hookway, Alasdair MacIntyre, John McDermott, Brian McGuinness, David Owen, Fred Schueler, Ken Stikkers, Ellen Suckiel, Sergio Tenenbaum, Bruce Wilshire, Aladdin Yaqūb, and readers for Cambridge University Press. The Department of Philosophy and the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of New Mexico provided unstinting support for my research, including a sabbatical leave, for which I would particularly like to thank Dean William C. Gordon and Dean Michael Fischer. Thanks also to audiences at sessions of the American Philosophical Association, Pacific and Central Divisions, and the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, where I presented parts of the book; and to audiences at the Universities of Hertford, Sheffield, Southampton, and Pennsylvania. Thanks to Donna Rivera and Gabriel Camacho for checking citations.

As always, my children, Elizabeth and Jacob, contributed in untold ways to my writing. I dedicate this book to their mother – my wife, friend, and companion, Anne Doughty Goodman.

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Abbreviations

Works by Ludwig Wittgenstein

PI *Philosophical Investigations.* Trans. G. E. M. Anscombe. New York: Macmillan, 1958. **Unless otherwise indicated, all references are to the numbered sections**.

TLP *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.* Trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961. **All references are to the numbered sections**.

BB *The Blue and Brown Books: Preliminary Studies for the Philosophical Investigations.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964.

Z *Zettel.* Eds. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright. Trans. G. E. M. Anscombe. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967. **All references are to the numbered sections**.

N *Notebooks 1914–1916.* Eds. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright. Trans. G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford Basil Blackwell, 1969.

OC *On Certainty.* Eds. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright. Trans. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969. **All references are to the numbered sections**.

RPP *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol. 1.* Trans. G. E. M. Anscombe. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. **All references are to the numbered sections**.

CV *Culture and Value.* Ed. G. H. von Wright. Trans. Peter Winch. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

L *Wittgenstein's Lectures on Philosophical Psychology 1946–7*. Ed. P. T. Geach. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

LE "A Lecture on Ethics," *Philosophical Occasions*. Eds. James Klagge and Alfred Nordmann. Indianapolis, IN, and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993: 36–44.

The numbers following the Wittgenstein abbreviations are either section numbers (e.g., TLP, 6.32) or page numbers (e.g., LE, 79).

Works by William James

P *Pragmatism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979.

PP *The Principles of Psychology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981.

VRE *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* in *Writings 1902–1910*. New York: Library of America, 1987.

All of the numbers following the James abbreviations are page numbers (e.g., PP, 472).

Introduction

This book concerns two extraordinary men who shaped twentieth-century philosophy: William James (1842–1910) and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951). James is the author of the thousand-page masterpiece, *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), a rich blend of philosophy, psychology, and personal reflection that has given us such ideas as "the stream of thought," and the baby's impression of the world "as one great blooming, buzzing confusion" (PP, 462). Ranging from the functions of the brain to multiple personalities, from intellect to will, to our general sense of reality, James's *Principles* is more than the first great psychology text. It contains seeds of pragmatism and phenomenology, and influenced thinkers as diverse as Edmund Husserl, Bertrand Russell, and John Dewey. It is, as Jacques Barzun has written, "an American masterpiece which, quite like Moby Dick, ought to be read from beginning to end at least once by every person professing to be educated."[1]

James's pioneering survey of religious psychology, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), introduced such terms as "the divided self" and "the sick soul," and an account of religion's significance in terms of its "fruits for life." James's religious concerns are also evident in *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (1897), *Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objections to the Doctrine* (1898), and *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909). James oscillated between thinking that a "study in human nature" such as *Varieties* could contribute to a "Science of Religion" and the belief that religious experience involved an

altogether supernatural domain, somehow inaccessible to science but accessible to the individual human subject.

James made some of his most important philosophical contributions in the last decade of his life, even as he labored unsuccessfully to complete a systematic philosophy. In a burst of writing in 1904–5 (collected in *Essays in Radical Empiricism* [1912]) he set out the metaphysical view most commonly known as "neutral monism," according to which there is one fundamental "stuff" that is neither material nor mental. He also published *Pragmatism* (1907), the definitive statement of a set of views that occur throughout his writings.

Wittgenstein's work is at the center of twentieth-century analytic philosophy in at least three of its phases: logical positivism, "ordinary language philosophy," and contemporary philosophical psychology. His *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921) offers a breathtakingly comprehensive and oracular account of language, logic, ethics, aesthetics, and philosophy – in a mere seventy-two pages. Wittgenstein holds that although everyday language is in perfect logical order (TLP, 5.5563), it nevertheless conceals its real form. The task of the book is not only to uncover that form or permeating structure but to argue for its necessity. For at the heart of the *Tractatus* is a transcendental argument: that without eternal, objective, and definite "senses" with perfectly precise relations to one another, language that succeeds in saying something could not exist. From this argument flows Wittgenstein's metaphysics of objects, states of affairs, and logic as representing "the scaffolding of the world" (TLP, 6.124).

Although most of the sentences in the *Tractatus* concern logic and language, Wittgenstein wrote that the point of the book was "an ethical one":

> My work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all that I have *not* written. And it is precisely this second part that is the important one. My book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were, and I am convinced that this is the ONLY *rigorous* way of drawing those limits. In short, I believe that where *many* others today are just *gassing*, I have managed in my book to put everything firmly into place by being silent about it.[2]

That "silence" took the form in the 1920s of Wittgenstein's devotion to such nonphilosophical activities as gardening, teaching elementary school, and designing a house in Vienna for his sister Margaret.

In 1924, responding to an invitation to return to Cambridge from John Maynard Keynes, Wittgenstein wrote about his interest in philosophy: "I myself no longer have any strong inner drive towards that sort of activity. Everything that I really had to say, I have said, and so the spring has run dry."[3] By the end of the decade, however, the spring had begun to flow again, as Wittgenstein came both to see profound difficulties in the system of the *Tractatus*, and to work out the more "anthropological"[4] approach of his later philosophy. Wittgenstein's posthumously published *Philosophical Investigations* introduces an open-ended and human-centered account of language and logic through such notions as "language-game," "forms of life," and "family resemblances." His new philosophy arises, however, as he begins his twenty-year study of James's *Principles of Psychology*.

James came to be the object of some of Wittgenstein's most deeply reaching criticisms, yet Wittgenstein loved and trusted him from the start. He read James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* in 1912, in his first year as a student of philosophy at Cambridge, when he wrote to Russell: "Whenever I have time now I read James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. This book does me a *lot* of good."[5] James was one of those very few writers – Tolstoy was another – whose works Wittgenstein could *stand* to reread. At one point after his return to philosophy in the 1930s, James's *Principles of Psychology* was the only book of philosophy visible on Wittgenstein's bookshelves.[6]

Wittgenstein learned from James. One can trace his assimilation of James's distinctions between two types of intentional action, one involving an act of will and the other not; between our normal experience of the words of our language and our experience of a mindlessly repeated word whose "soul has fled"; between a word that has an essential definition and one, like "religion," which connotes "many characters which may alternately be equally important" (VRE, 32). In James's texts, Wittgenstein discovered an acute sense of the "variety" of human experience – religious, secular, emotional, cognitive, receptive, active, extraordinary, ordinary – that was deeply congenial as he worked on what he called his "album" of "remarks" and "sketches" of human life (PI, v).

James and Wittgenstein never met, of course, for James died in America a year before Wittgenstein came to England from his native Austria to study engineering. Yet one might imagine them strolling

along the footpaths of Cambridge, or, better still – given their taste for wildness – in the mountains of New York or New Hampshire where James had summer homes, talking about human psychology, the pluralistic nature of reality, pragmatism, or the forms of human life. However, there would be an anxiety to such conversations because of Wittgenstein's substantial criticisms of *The Principles*; but also because of his concern near the end of his life that he had produced a version of pragmatism, which was a philosophy he abhorred. The genial James would have been a match for the severe Wittgenstein, I believe, but I wonder how much ground he would have yielded in the face of Wittgenstein's criticisms. And in a face-to-face meeting with James, would Wittgenstein have acknowledged with less anxiety his affinities with James's own pragmatism? Would he have been able to teach James the differences between pragmatism and his later philosophy?

This book does not consist of such imaginary conversations, however. It is rooted in discussions of James that did take place – in Wittgenstein's journals and typescripts, and in his published works, especially *Philosophical Investigations.* If, as Stanley Cavell has written, the *Investigations* offers a picture of "our times," our culture,[7] I wish to consider James's prominence in that picture. Seventeen people are mentioned in the *Investigations*, among them Beethoven, Schubert, and Goethe; the Gestalt psychologist Wolfgang Köhler; and the physicist Michael Faraday. Five others are mentioned twice – Lewis Carroll, Moses, and three philosophers: Wittgenstein's Cambridge colleagues Frank Ramsey and Bertrand Russell, and Socrates. The three remaining people named in the *Investigations* are also philosophers: Gottlob Frege and William James, each mentioned four times, with only St. Augustine exceeding them with five citations. Such counting – and merely focusing on the places where Wittgenstein mentions James – may of course be misleading. We will see, for example, that James is more extensively present in the *Investigations* than these explicit citations reveal and that these citations are not fair indicators of what Wittgenstein learned from James. John Passmore, one of the first commentators to assert the importance not only of *The Principles of Psychology* but of *Pragmatism* for understanding the *Philosophical Investigations*, is thus right not only to note the "rare distinction" of Wittgenstein's many references to James, but to observe that Wittgenstein does so in a manner that fails to "bring out the nature

of his relationship to James."[8] The specification of that relationship is a main concern of the following chapters.

Because Wittgenstein and James are typically placed in two distinct traditions of contemporary philosophy, their relationship has not often been taken into account. Wittgenstein commentators tend not to have studied James, and students of James often know little about Wittgenstein.[9] When the relationship is discussed, commentators tend to focus on Wittgenstein's criticisms of James – which are substantial – and to ignore the complicated overlapping views and temperaments of these two great writers. My claim is not simply that James and Wittgenstein share views about specific topics, but that they share a set of commitments: to antifoundationalism, to the description of the concrete details of human life, to the priority of practice over intellect, and to the importance of religion in understanding human life.

James held that the key to a philosopher was his vision of things, his "mode of feeling the whole push." He wrote: "The books of all the great philosophers are like so many men. Our sense of an essential personal flavor in each one of them, typical but indescribable, is the finest fruit of our own accomplished philosophic education" (P, 24). Wittgenstein agreed with James on the connection between the philosophy and the philosopher. He wrote that work in philosophy is "more like a kind of working on oneself. On one's own conception. On the way one sees things."[10] It was, I shall try to show, for his nuanced and broadminded way of "seeing things" that Wittgenstein admired William James.

In standard English-language accounts of twentieth-century philosophy, the classical American philosophers (Peirce, James, Dewey, Santayana, etc.) are treated tangentially, with the main developments occurring elsewhere: in England and then the United States with the rise of analytic (or "Anglo-American") philosophy; in Austria and again in the United States with the rise of logical positivism; or on "the continent," where phenomenology, existentialism, the Frankfurt School, and postmodernism developed. The depth and importance of Wittgenstein's relationship to James requires, it seems to me, that we adjust our picture of twentieth-century philosophy, just as the recent understanding of the Emerson–Nietzsche connection is changing the way we see nineteenth-century philosophy.[11] There is, I shall argue, a classical American presence in analytic philosophy running

not only through C. I. Lewis, Morton White, W. V. O. Quine, and Hilary Putnam – Americans all – but, a generation earlier, through the work of an Austrian who worked in England and visited America only in the last years of his life.

If this story has two heroes, it also has a subplot: Wittgenstein's troubled relation to pragmatism, the tradition that James (along with Charles Sanders Peirce) is generally supposed to have founded.[12] In the last four years of his life, Wittgenstein twice questioned his own pragmatism: in the account of knowledge called *On Certainty*, and in the preliminary study for the second part of *Investigations* published as *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology.* As I shall begin to argue in Chapter 1, James's writings help us appreciate some respects in which Wittgenstein's thought is indeed akin to pragmatism, but they also show that pragmatism is what Wittgenstein calls a "family resemblance" term, with no one feature running through all its instances. Just as there may be a typical Jones family nose or laugh, there are typical pragmatic emphases – on practice, for example, or on the future – but these are no more found in all pragmatisms or pragmatic doctrines than the Jones laugh is found in every last brother, sister, and cousin of the same family. The question I will consider is how closely Wittgenstein is related to the pragmatist family, and particularly to William James.

In James's *Pragmatism* alone, pragmatism is at least five things: a theory of truth, a theory of meaning, a holistic account of knowledge, a method of resolving philosophical disputes, and a human temperament. I consider some similarities between each of these facets of pragmatism and Wittgenstein's philosophy, but two of them are particularly important, for they mark the respects in which Wittgenstein asks himself whether he is a pragmatist. The first of these, the pragmatic account of knowledge, forms the subject of Chapter 1. The second, the pragmatic account of meaning, is the point of departure for Chapter 6.

In the "revival of pragmatism"[13] during the last decades of the twentieth century, two philosophers – Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam – occupy especially prominent positions.[14] Each in his own way embraces a Wittgensteinian philosophy of language and a pragmatic account of knowledge and truth. Rorty, for example, gives a pragmatist slant to the "Wittgensteinian analogy between vocabularies and tools,"[15] holding that for Wittgenstein "all vocabularies, even those which contain the words which we take most seriously, the ones most

essential for our self-descriptions – are human creations, tools for the creation of such other human artifacts as poems, utopian societies, scientific theories, and future generations."[16] Putnam sees Wittgenstein, James, and Husserl among "philosophers in the Neo-Kantian tradition . . . who claim that commonsense tables and chairs and sensations and electrons are *equally real* . . .";[17] and he uses James's humanist slogan that "the trail of the human serpent is over all" to characterize the "program" concerning reality and truth these philosophers share.[18] These powerful contemporary syntheses of Wittgensteinian and pragmatic philosophies, I want to argue, were preceded and prepared for by Wittgenstein's own engagement with a founding pragmatist writer, William James.

No introduction to the philosophies of James and Wittgenstein would be adequate without at least some acknowledgment of the extraordinarily substantial and interesting lives they led. It seems that there is a new biography of the fascinating William James every few years; and the classic works on his life include Ralph Barton Perry's *The Thought and Character of William James*, Henry James's *Notes of a Son and Brother*, Gay Wilson Allen's *William James*, and Jacques Barzun's *A Stroll with William James*.[19] Ray Monk's *Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, is a compelling and thorough account of Wittgenstein's life and work. There are finely wrought treatments of his life by Norman Malcolm and Brian McGuinness, several collections of memoirs, and even a film by Derek Jarman (Wittgenstein [1993]).

Both philosophers came from extraordinary families. The James family was presided over by William's father, Henry James, Sr., a disciple of Fourier and Swedenborg; a friend of Emerson, Horace Greeley, Thomas Carlyle, and John Stuart Mill;[20] and an author of such books (published at his own expense) as *The Nature of Evil* and *Moralism and Christianity*.[21] The elder James's life of leisure and study, and the many trips he took to Europe with his young family, were financed by the wealth accumulated by his father William, an Irish immigrant who made a fortune building Albany and the Erie Canal.[22] The family also included William's brilliant and tragically short-lived sister Alice, and, above all, his younger brother, the novelist Henry James, Jr.

Wittgenstein's musically oriented family, far wealthier than the merely very comfortable Jameses, was at the center of Viennese culture. The family's place in Vienna was established by Ludwig's father, Karl, who amassed one of the great fortunes of the Austro-Hungarian

empire in the steel industry. Ludwig's mother, Leopoldine Kalmus, nurtured the family's musical interests: Brahms, Mahler, and Bruno Walter regularly attended musical evenings in the palatial Wittgenstein home.[23] One of Ludwig's brothers, Hans, was a child prodigy on the piano and violin,[24] and another, Paul, was a brilliant pianist, for whom Ravel composed the "Concerto in D Major, for left hand."[25]

Whereas James was the dominant (even, it has been argued, dominating)[26] oldest brother, Ludwig was the youngest child, growing up in the reflected light of his brilliant older siblings. He did not play a musical instrument until he learned the clarinet as part of his training as a schoolteacher in the twenties. He was considered a bit dull, if unfailingly polite. Unlike several rebellious older brothers, Ludwig was obedient to his father's wishes that he study engineering. At the Realschule in Linz, where he spent his fourteenth through seventeenth years, he was a poor student, receiving mostly Cs and Ds, with an occasional B in English and natural history. His only two As were in religious studies.[27] Five years later, however, he felt competent enough to draw up a plan for a book on philosophy, to travel to Jena to discuss it with the logician Gottlob Frege, and then to Cambridge, where he was encouraged to continue in philosophy by the co-author of *Principia Mathematica*, Bertrand Russell.

James and Wittgenstein were personal opposites. Wittgenstein was a loner who gave away his money, never married, and was "difficult" even for his friends;[28] whereas James was a popular lecturer and public figure who drew crowds, with a large circle of friends with whom he corresponded in a vast output of letters. James's marriage to Alice Gibbens in 1879 brought a stability to his life that it had formerly lacked. Yet both men were "sick souls" in the sense coined by William James, people for whom radical evil "gets its innings" in the world, yet who achieve some form of redemption. Both had their personal crises, their periods of paralysis and self-hatred, and, as James wrote, their "days when the weather seems all whispering with peace, hours when the goodness and beauty of existence enfold us like a dry warm climate, or chime through us as if our inner ears were subtly ringing with the world's security" (VRE, 252). Both men managed to record or express such experiences in their philosophical work: in James's *Varieties*, and *The Principles of Psychology*, for example; in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and his "Lecture on Ethics," where he mentions his own

experiences of "absolute safety" – the feeling of being safe "*whatever* happens" (LE, 42).

If Wittgenstein sought in his early work to put the important things in their proper place by being silent about them, he came in his later writing to sketch a great canvas of human life, including our religious forms of life. On his later understanding of meaning, these religious forms – forms that include not just words, but pictures and practices – have meaning because they have a use, a role to play in human life. James sought to find a proper place for religion in the modern world also; and he came to find in human experience and practice a great part of its significance. Sometimes he envisioned a "science of religions" (which would have been anathema to Wittgenstein); but he also promoted a version of pragmatism that would be no more hostile to religion than to science, that would be "willing to take anything, to follow either logic or the senses and to count the humblest and most personal experiences . . . if they have practical consequences. She will take a God who lives in the very dirt of private fact . . ." (P, 44). This is the pragmatism that chimes with Wittgenstein's philosophy, both early and late.

Wittgenstein became a *reader* of James. If Wittgenstein was one of the truly original philosophers of our time, as I believe, then he was no one's "disciple" or slavish follower. Yet there were some writers whom he felt to be deeply right in their approach to philosophy – in their character as philosophers, one might say – whose books he continued to have on his shelves, and to read. One of these was St. Augustine, the first (and most-often) mentioned person in the *Investigations*. Wittgenstein's friend Maurice Drury once mentioned to Wittgenstein that G. E. Moore opened his lectures by saying that he would speak on all the topics required of a professor of philosophy at Cambridge except the philosophy of religion. In response,

> Wittgenstein immediately asked me if I had available a copy of St. Augustine's *Confessions*. I handed him my Loeb edition. He must have known his way about the book thoroughly for he found the passage he wanted in a few seconds. . . . "And woe to those who say nothing concerning thee just because the chatterboxes talk a lot of nonsense. . . ." He went on to say that he considered St. Augustine's *Confessions* as possibly the "most serious book ever written."[29]

Wittgenstein read James as seriously and devotedly as he read St. Augustine, for he found in James a philosophical writer who

ranged widely and humanely over religion and psychology, language, meaning, and our very being in the world – without being "a chatterbox." Wittgenstein read certain works of James as he read the *Confessions* – again and again, not without criticism, but with deep appreciation and a sense of intellectual equality. A. C. Jackson, one of Wittgenstein's pupils, reported that "Wittgenstein very frequently referred to James in his lectures, even making on one occasion – to everybody's astonishment – a precise reference to a page number!"[30]

The astonishment carries considerable cultural weight, reflecting the view, still prevailing in professional philosophy (and particularly in England), that James's time has passed, that there is no more gold to mine in those hills. James was (and is) considered crude, unsophisticated, unprofessional, and grossly "American." Yet Jackson's notes from Wittgenstein's 1946–7 lectures show that William James's name occurs frequently. This is also the time when Wittgenstein was preparing the typescript called *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology Vol. 1*, where James is mentioned more than any other person (nine times). It is in these *Remarks* that, after considering the uses to which religious pictures are put, Wittgenstein asks himself whether he is a pragmatist.

And so I find myself circling back to pragmatism, a subject mostly unnamed in Wittgenstein's work – certainly less-often named than William James, and never in conjunction with a reference to James. From everything Wittgenstein says about James – much of it quite critical, some of it admiring – one would have no grounds for concluding that James is a pragmatist! Yet broad pragmatist themes run through James's work from start to finish, including the works Wittgenstein read with such care: *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and *The Principles of Psychology*. The term "pragmatism" has always been used loosely – indeed it was designed that way by James. In the midst of the contemporary "revival of pragmatism" we may be apt to see pragmatism everywhere and so, in pragmatist terms, to secure less and less cash value in saying so. So I think that Stanley Cavell is right to ask what use it is to call Wittgenstein a pragmatist.[31] I reply that its use may be to direct our attention to questions Wittgenstein raised, and to features of his work that give rise to these questions. These questions will, in turn, lead us back to Wittgenstein's long engagement – lasting almost forty years – with the writings of William James.

1

Varieties of Pragmatic Experience

In the last year of his life, Wittgenstein wrote: "So I am trying to say something that sounds like pragmatism. Here I am being thwarted by a kind of *Weltanschauung*" (OC, 422). What does Wittgenstein mean by "pragmatism" here, and what features of his position make it "sound like pragmatism"? Does Wittgenstein's position sound to him only or *merely* like pragmatism, without actually *being* pragmatism? What did Wittgenstein find hindering or obstructing him, and in what was he thwarted – the expression of his position, for example, or the appreciation of his position by others? In seeking answers to these questions I begin with a discussion of Wittgenstein's knowledge of pragmatism, then pass to a discussion of those themes of *On Certainty* to which Wittgenstein may have been referring, using James's *Pragmatism* as a point of reference. These questions can best be answered, however, through a consideration of Wittgenstein's longstanding relationship with writings by a founder of pragmatism, William James. This task will occupy the succeeding four chapters, after which we shall then return, in Chapter 6, to the question of Wittgenstein's relation to pragmatism.

1

The one explicitly pragmatist work we know Wittgenstein to have read is James's *Varieties of Religious Experience.* In his initial year of study at Cambridge, Wittgenstein sent a postcard to Bertrand Russell, in which he writes: "Whenever I have time I now read James's Varieties of

religious exp[erience]. This book does me a *lot* of good."[1] Seventeen years later he recommended *Varieties* as a good work of philosophy – without so much as a quibble about its pragmatism – to his undergraduate friend Maurice Drury.[2] *Varieties of Religious Experience* contains a presentation of Peirce's pragmatist principle that the significance of a term lies in its "practical consequences" (VRE, 399), and employs pragmatist methods in evaluating the significance of religious experience.[3] There is no evidence, however, that it was the pragmatic method employed in *Varieties* that Wittgenstein particularly admired – indeed, the evidence points the other way.

For Wittgenstein entered an environment quite hostile to pragmatism when he first came up to Cambridge in late 1911. His two main teachers and friends – Russell and G. E. Moore – wrote critical reviews of James's *Pragmatism* soon after it was published.[4] Wittgenstein would have read Russell's review, as it was reprinted in his *Philosophical Essays* (1910), a work Wittgenstein discusses in a 1912 letter to Russell.[5] The only English pragmatist was the Oxford philosopher Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller. Whereas Russell had considerable respect for James both as a man and as a philosopher (he explicitly derives the neutral monism of *The Analysis of Mind* from James's "radical empiricism"), he had no such respect for Schiller.[6] "I am in a state of fury," he wrote to Lady Ottoline Morrell,

> because Schiller has sent me a book on Formal Logic which he has had the impertinence to write. He neither knows nor respects the subject, and of course writes offensive rot. I am already thinking of all the jokes I will make about the book if I have to review it. I don't really dislike Schiller. I am the only human being who doesn't – because though he is a bounder and a vulgarizer of everything he touches, he is alive, adventurous and good-natured. So I don't feel venomous about him as I do about Bergson.[7]

Russell's twenty-page review takes on a battery of formidable pragmatist works, including James's *Pragmatism*, Schiller's books on "Humanism," John Dewey's *Studies in Logical Theory*, and *Essays Philosophical and Psychological in Honor of William James* by faculty at Columbia University. He maintains that pragmatism is genuinely new, despite James's claim to be providing only a "new name for some old ways of thinking." Pragmatism, Russell writes, is adapted to the "predominant intellectual temper of our time."[8] It embodies skepticism

and evolution, but also "democracy, the increased belief in human power which has come from the progress of mechanical invention, and the Bismarckian belief in force."[9] Taking his cue from Schiller's praise of "the young, the strong, the virile," Russell comments: "The inventor, the financier, the advertiser, the successful man of action generally, can find in pragmatism an expression of their instinctive view of the world."[10] These views – however accurate or fair – would hardly have recommended pragmatism to Wittgenstein.

Russell credits Peirce with coining the word "pragmatism" for the idea that the significance of thought lies in the actions to which it leads; but he adds that the idea "remained sterile until it was taken up twenty years later by William James. . . ." This, then, is pragmatism as a theory of meaning or "significance." It is a theory, Russell charges, that deprives us of anything stable in which to believe, and which in the end is profoundly and irresponsibly skeptical: "The scepticism embodied in pragmatism is that which says 'Since all beliefs are absurd, we may as well believe what is most convenient.'"[11] A pragmatist such as James, Russell continues, holds that in any context, including science, we should believe whatever gives us satisfaction. This would then make psychology the paramount consideration in determining whether a belief is true.[12] (Here we have pragmatism as a theory of truth.) Russell also charges that pragmatists are relativists: "One gathers (perhaps wrongly) from [James's] instances that a Frenchman ought to believe in Catholicism, an American in the Monroe Doctrine, and an Arab in the Mahdi. . . ."[13]

One of Russell's bolder claims is that James's doctrine in *The Will to Believe* is continuous with that in *Pragmatism.*[14] But Russell portrays the lines of continuity in an unattractive light, maintaining that James's view in both works is that "although there is no evidence in favour of religion, we ought nevertheless to believe it if we find satisfaction in so doing."[15] This is a crude and unfair account of James's position in *The Will to Believe*, for he nowhere says what one *ought* to believe, but only what one has a *right* to believe; and he certainly did not hold – there or in *Pragmatism* – that one should believe things for which one has *no* evidence.[16] If Russell's summary isn't always a reliable guide to James, it is certainly a reliable indicator of the distinctly bad odor in which pragmatism was held among Wittgenstein's friends and disciples.[17] And it presages Wittgenstein's hostility to the pragmatic theory of truth.

Although pragmatism was for Russell mainly an object of criticism and ridicule, the story he tells about it is not entirely negative. He credits pragmatism with improving on Mill's inductive logic by recognizing what we would now call holistic elements in scientific induction: "We cannot say that this or that fact proves this or that law: the whole body of facts proves (or, rather, renders probable) the whole body of laws. . . . Thus the justification of a science is that it fits all the known facts, and that no alternative system of hypotheses is known which fits the facts equally well." Yet Russell objects to this pragmatist view on the ground that "there are truths of fact which are prior to the whole inductive procedure." He admits that

> "[s]uch general assumptions as causality, the existence of an external world, etc., cannot be supported by Mill's canons of induction, but require a far more comprehensive treatment of the whole organized body of accepted scientific doctrine. It is in such treatment that the pragmatic method is seen at its best; and among men of science, its apparent success in this direction has doubtless contributed greatly to its acceptance."[18]

I shall argue that it is precisely this *pragmatic holism* – which Wittgenstein encountered in Russell's *Philosophical Essays* in 1912 – that sounded uncomfortably close to Wittgenstein's own philosophy in 1951.[19] James's word for this holism was sometimes "pragmatism," and sometimes "humanism."[20]

Moore was the other major philosophical figure in Wittgenstein's early years at Cambridge. Wittgenstein attended Moore's lectures in 1912 and told Russell "how much he loves Moore, how he likes and dislikes people for the way they think. . . ."[21] Two years later, he entreated Moore to visit him in Norway, where he dictated the "Notes on Logic" that introduced the central Tractarian distinction between saying and showing. Moore did not think well of pragmatism. His review of James's *Pragmatism* first appeared in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* for 1907–8 (when Moore was thirty-three and James was sixty-five), and was reprinted in Moore's *Philosophical Studies* (1922).[22] Moore takes up James's "humanistic" claim that "to an unascertainable extent our truths are man-made products," maintaining that it is "a commonplace that almost all our beliefs, true as well as false, depend, in some way or other upon what has previously been in some human mind." Certainly, Moore points out, we obtain many of our beliefs from other

people. However, James wants to say something that is neither a commonplace nor, according to Moore, true: "I think he certainly means to suggest that we not only make our true beliefs, but also that we *make them true.*"[23] But, of course, as Moore explains in meticulous detail, it is just not true that my *belief* that the sun will rise *causes the sun to rise.*

Moore also considers James's view that "all our true ideas are useful."[24] On the contrary, he argues,

> there seems to be an immense number of true ideas, which occur but once and to one person, and never again either to him or to anyone else. I may, for instance, idly count the number of dots on the back of a card, and arrive at a true idea of their number; and yet, perhaps, I may never think of their number again, nor anybody else ever know it. . . . is it quite certain that all these true ideas are useful? It seems to me perfectly clear, on the contrary, that many of them are not.[25]

Moore argues that a "long-run" view of truth does not help avoid this problem, for he denies that all true beliefs pay in the long run. Some of them, he maintains, may have no effects at all. Moore also argues that according to James, if it were useful to believe in William James's existence "this belief would be true, even if he didn't exist."[26]

Moore's rather condescending attitude to James is summed up in his view that some of what James says is just "silly":

> I hope Professor James would admit all these things to be silly, for if he and other Pragmatists would admit even as much as this, I think a good deal would be gained. But it by no means follows that because a philosopher would admit a view to be silly, when it is definitely put before him, he has not himself been constantly holding and implying that very view.[27]

James replied to his critics in a series of articles published in the first decade of the century.[28] He was aware that pragmatism "is usually described as a characteristically American movement, a sort of bobtailed scheme of thought, excellently fitted for the man on the street, who naturally hates theory and wants cash returns immediately.[29] But he charged Russell and Moore[30] with taking the pragmatists' terms narrowly, with taking *paying,* for example, as something that we can observe *vis-à-vis* any belief, at any given moment within our experience (Moore thinks it obvious that idly counting the number of dots on a card does not "pay."). Yet, the holism James embraces, and which Russell discusses, provides the resources used by later pragmatists to

deal with Moore's objections. If, as Quine maintains, our beliefs "face the tribunal of reality . . . not individually but as a corporate body," our belief about the number of dots is part of a web of belief – including, for example, beliefs about what one did on the afternoon one counted those dots. It "pays" as part of this web.[31]

The exception to the uniformly negative attitude toward pragmatism among Wittgenstein's Cambridge colleagues was Frank Ramsey, one of the few British philosophers to study Peirce. Ramsey developed a pragmatist justification of induction, and conceived of logic as a normative discipline concerned with "how we ought to think."[32] In 1923, while still an undergraduate studying mathematics and philosophy, Ramsey reviewed the *Tractatus* for *Mind*, and later that year visited Wittgenstein in Austria, where they pored over the English translation of the *Tractatus* line by line. When Wittgenstein returned to Cambridge as a student in 1929, Ramsey became his supervisor. In the Preface to the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein credits him with "always certain and forceful" criticisms of the *Tractatus* (PI, vi). There is no evidence, however, that he and Wittgenstein discussed pragmatism. In any case, Wittgenstein came to have deep reservations about Ramsey as a thinker. "A good objection," he wrote in his journal, "helps one forward, a shallow objection, even if it is valid, is wearisome. Ramsey's objections are of this kind."[33] A year or so after Ramsey's death at the tragically early age of 26, Wittgenstein confided to his diary that Ramsey was a "bourgeois thinker," who was disturbed by "real philosophical reflection" (CV, 17). Ramsey did not seem to Wittgenstein to have advanced the pragmatist cause.

Wittgenstein criticizes what seems to be a pragmatic theory of validity in an unpublished work from the early thirties, entitled *Philosophical Grammar*: "If I want to carve a block of wood into a particular shape any cut that gives it the right shape is a good one. But I don't call an argument a good argument just because it has the consequences I want (Pragmatism)."[34] This argument against a theory in some respects like Ramsey's, echoes the criticisms Russell and Moore launched against the pragmatist theory of truth: that for the pragmatist, "true" simply means "having the consequences one wants."

Pragmatism was thus "in the air" throughout Wittgenstein's life, something he is likely to have heard others speak of, and which he brought up from time to time in his writing and conversation – but

never favorably. In his 1946–7 lectures he mentions in passing that Dewey held belief to be "an adjustment of the organism" (L, 90). And in a conversation with O. K. Bouwsma a year or so later – during the time he composed *On Certainty* – he offers an opinion of Dewey that indicates the continuity of his negative attitude toward pragmatism and pragmatist writers. Walking in the gorge at Cornell, Wittgenstein criticizes current philosophy as represented in Paul Schilpp's *Library of Living Philosophers*:

> He had never read any of these – had opened the Moore volume – read about Moore's boyhood – very nice, but the shoemaker also had a boyhood, very nice. Dewey – was Dewey still living? Yes. Ought not to be. Russell was once very good. Once did some hard work. Cambridge kicked him out when he was good. Invited him back when he was bad.[35]

Wittgenstein goes on and on about Russell, but although he at least states that Russell *once* was good, he has no kind word for Dewey. Wittgenstein does not show *anywhere* a positive attitude toward pragmatism. The possibility that his own philosophy sounds "something like pragmatism" was not for him a happy one.

There is one more source, however, for Wittgenstein's acquaintance with pragmatism: a book by a founding pragmatist writer that we know Wittgenstein to have read again and again. This is James's *Principles of Psychology*, a book that, unlike *Pragmatism,* met with much favor in Britain. It was required reading for the psychology course at Cambridge, and Benjamin Ward's long article on psychology in the 1911 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* makes extensive use of James's work. Wittgenstein refers to the book in his journals and typescripts, from the early 1930s until the end of his life; and in such works as *Philosophical Grammar, The Brown Book,* the two volumes of *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology,* and the *Philosophical Investigations.*

Although it was published eight years before James identified himself as a pragmatist, *The Principles of Psychology* is in many ways continuous with James's later works, including *Pragmatism.*[36] One way of putting the relationship is to say that in *The Principles,* James sets out the psychology presupposed by pragmatism: of the human subject as a "fighter for ends," who sculpts experience according to her interests (PP, 277).[37] "It is far too little recognized," James writes,

how entirely the intellect is built up of practical interests. . . . The germinal question concerning things brought for the first time before consciousness is not the theoretic 'What is that?' but the practical 'Who goes there?' or rather, as Horwicz has admirably put it, 'What is to be done?' – *Was fang' ich an?*' . . . In all our discussions about the intelligence of lower animals the only test we use is that of their *acting* as if for a purpose" (PP, 941).

Wittgenstein considered as a motto for the *Investigations* a line from Goethe's *Faust*: "In the beginning was the deed."[38] This line would serve equally well as a motto for some main themes of *The Principles of Psychology*.

The Principles of Psychology is more than a work of psychology, despite James's repeated declarations that he will avoid philosophical issues. Among the many philosophical pronouncements James makes is a statement that anticipates the holistic humanism developed in *Pragmatism*:

> It is conceivable that several rival theories should equally well include the actual order of our sensations in their scheme. . . . *That theory will be most generally believed which, besides offering us objects able to account satisfactorily for our sensible experience, also offers those which are most interesting, those which appeal most urgently to our aesthetic, emotional, and active needs*" (PP, 939–40).[39]

The idea that several theories might adequately account for our sensible "data," and that our criteria for acceptance of theories are shaped by who we are as human beings, presages James's later pluralistic humanism, as it does Putnam's "many faces of realism."[40]

In considering the possible relevance of *The Principles* to Wittgenstein's acquaintance with pragmatism we must also keep in mind that James considered pragmatism to be a type of personality or temperament, a mediator between the "tough minded" and the "tender minded." The pragmatist finds middle ground between empiricism and idealism; concrete facts and the pull of principles; dogmatism and skepticism; optimism and pessimism (P, 13). This appreciative and mediating temperament is, in many ways, the temperament of William James, and it pervades all his books. As we consider *The Principles* in Chapters 3 through 5, we will consider ways in which it offered Wittgenstein a pragmatist philosophical persona: nonfanatical, concerned to avoid the grip of theory, attuned to the human

interests served by our theorizing, and flexible enough to move on without having every question answered.

2

If Wittgenstein knew enough about pragmatism to use the term "pragmatism" to describe some aspects of his own philosophy in *On Certainty,* what exactly are they? I want to begin with a set of paragraphs dated March 20, 1951, just a day before the single appearance of the word "pragmatism" in Wittgenstein's book at section 422. These begin as follows:

> Our knowledge forms an enormous system. And only within this system has a particular bit the value we give it (OC, 410).
>
> If I say "we *assume* that the earth has existed for many years past" (or something similar), then of course it sounds strange that we should assume such a thing. But in the entire system of our language-games it belongs to the foundations. The assumption, one might say, forms the basis of action, and therefore, naturally, of thought (OC, 411).

These paragraphs exhibit two features that Wittgenstein's philosophy shares with James's pragmatism: a sense that not all empirical propositions, or beliefs, play the same role; and a sense of the interrelation of action and thought. Notice Wittgenstein's complicated description of the role of beliefs like "the earth has existed for many years past." This is the sort of belief a radical skeptic questions, but one that in our "normal," nonphilosophical lives we do not question. (It is also one of the beliefs Russell wrote that pragmatists are particularly good at giving an account of.) Such a belief, Wittgenstein asserts, "forms the basis of action, and therefore, of thought." If the earth just popped into existence a moment ago, why should I expect to find any stationery when I open my desk; and how can I think of myself as having lived in New York years ago if the earth didn't exist years ago? In such ways the belief is a basis for action and thought.

Moore attempted to prove such beliefs, and claimed to "know" the truth of the propositions they contain. His two papers, "Proof of an External World" and "A Defence of Common Sense,"[41] are under direct attack in *On Certainty* precisely for not recognizing the special

place these propositions have in our system of belief:

> Moore's assurance that he knows . . . does not interest us. The propositions, however, which Moore retails as examples of such known truths are indeed interesting. Not because anyone knows their truth, or believes he knows them, but because they all have a *similar* role in the system of our empirical judgments (OC, 137).
>
> We don't, for example arrive at any of them as a result of investigation (OC, 138).

Wittgenstein's description at section 411 of *On Certainty* highlights the role of action, suggesting that action precedes "thought." Yet, action takes place against a background of certain beliefs, which have a particular foundational value within "this system." *On Certainty* works within the framework of the *Philosophical Investigations* view that language takes the form of language games, which are complicated forms of living – including building, praying, telling jokes, reporting, and playing games (PI, 23). Within each practice, certain beliefs stand fast; and some beliefs stand fast for many, some perhaps for all, of our practices. It is not that these beliefs are "a priori true," seen in a flash of insight into the nature of things, or a consequence of some definition we decide to adopt; they are off our routes of inquiry or investigation. Wittgenstein's stress on action in making this point is especially pronounced at section 204 of *On Certainty*: "Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end; – but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i. e. it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game." "Our acting" forms the background against which our language-games take shape. Our linguistic practices "show" the background against which they appear. But the background shows things on which these linguistic practices depend: "My *life* shows that I know, am certain, etc." (OC, 7). In Wittgenstein's later philosophy, as in this quotation, action and thought are intertwined, with each at times providing the background for the other.

Wittgenstein often speaks of the background as a set of "propositions," and he also speaks of a "world-picture." But equally often he speaks, as mentioned previously, of actions, rather than propositions: the "end" of the justificatory questions is said to be not a proposition but a set of actions, a form of life. This side of Wittgenstein's thinking

corresponds to John Searle's notion of "The Background," which is a set of "nonrepresentational mental capacities," such as "walking, eating, grasping, perceiving, recognizing, and the preintentional stance that takes account of the solidity of things, and the independent existence of objects and other people...."[42] For Searle, the existence of the world is not something I hypothesize, but rather something to which I show "commitment... whenever I do pretty much anything."[43] Just because it is possible to extricate an element of the background and "treat it as a representation," Searle cautions, it does not follow that "when it is functioning, it is functioning as a representation."[44]

With his emphasis on action, practice, and, as we shall see, instinct, Wittgenstein suggests a view like Searle's. Yet he continues to think of the "enormous system" as, at least in part, representational. Much of the work of *On Certainty* lies in an attempt to explain the nature of this system, and the book contains a series of forceful and beautiful metaphors expressing the idea that some propositions are under contention or exploration, while others are outside the domain of inquiry. Those outside the domain of inquiry are, as it were, already tacitly "decided" upon – not by any individual or group of individuals, but by the human culture living within the framework they provide. Wittgenstein speaks of our "frame of reference," versus the facts we discover within the frame (OC, 83); of the route traveled by inquiry versus the places inquiry does not go (OC, 88); of the "inherited background" versus the truths we discover against this background (OC, 94); of convictions lying on an "unused siding" (OC, 210) versus those on the main line; and of the "hinges" of all else that we do.

This fundamental distinction of *On Certainty,* both akin to and distinct from the Jamesean pragmatic holism we shall examine in the following section, appears in the following quotations:

> The *truth* of certain empirical propositions belongs to our frame of reference (OC, 83).
>
> It may be for example that *all enquiry on our part* is set so as to exempt certain propositions from doubt, if they are ever formulated. They lie apart from the route traveled by enquiry (OC, 88).
>
> But I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No: it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false (OC, 94).

Does my telephone call to New York strengthen my conviction that the earth exists?

Much seems to be fixed, and it is removed from the traffic. It is so to speak shunted onto an unused siding (OC, 210).

Now it gives our way of looking at things, and our researches, their form. Perhaps it was once disputed. But perhaps, for unthinkable ages, it has belonged to the scaffolding of our thoughts (Every human being has parents.) (OC, 211).

That is to say, the *questions* that we raise and our *doubts* depend on the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn (OC, 341).

That is to say, it belongs to the logic of our scientific investigations that certain things are *in deed* not doubted (OC, 342).

Wittgenstein is talking about propositions isolated by Moore in his responses to skepticism (or, if one follows Searle, preintentional stances "treatable" as propositions), but misunderstood by him as items of "knowledge." These propositions – such as "The earth has existed for many years past" – constitute the "framework" or "hinge" propositions that are "fixed," on the side. They are tied up with our actions or practices. They are "*in deed* not doubted." There is no need to strengthen our confidence in these beliefs; and, more importantly, there is no *point* in doing so, for they are already as strong as beliefs get. This is why a telephone call to New York may strengthen my conviction that my friend really intends to visit, but *not* strengthen my conviction that the earth exists. That conviction is already "certain," in its position in the framework, on the unused siding.

Wittgenstein's framework propositions, like Moore's list of things he knows, are a diverse lot. Some of them are global and impersonal ("The earth has existed for many years past"), while others are stated in the first person, and true of a particular human being ("I have never been in Asia Minor" [OC, 419]). This latter proposition is as sure as anything in Wittgenstein's framework, but not in that of a resident of Turkey. As with the more global propositions, Wittgenstein finds that the certainty of the proposition arises neither from a priori understanding, nor from investigation, but from its role in one's life, including its relation to other propositions one believes. Where, Wittgenstein asks, do I get the knowledge that I have never been in Asia Minor? He replies: "I have not worked it out, no one told me; my memory tells me. – So I can't be wrong about it? Is there a truth here

which I *know*? – I cannot depart from this judgment without toppling all other judgments with it" (OC, 419). All other judgments will topple because none is more certain than this one, and because this one is tied in with others. For example, if it turns out that Wittgenstein has in fact spent many years in Asia Minor despite his firm memory to the contrary, why should he believe – trust himself in believing – that he left his notebook on his desk, or that he is now in England? But of course he has *investigated* none of these matters.

Wittgenstein sounds a note of radical skepticism in the idea of "toppling all other judgments." Like Moore, he is concerned with the proper response to those, like Descartes, who question whether we really have bodies, or are awake when we think we are, living in a world of things and people. Whereas the proper response to skepticism is a matter of central concern to Wittgenstein,[45] pragmatists tend to sidestep it – more or less instinctively in James, more self-consciously in Dewey and Peirce.[46] (For example, Dewey's notion of experience as a "transaction" *builds in* the idea of self-world interaction that the radical skeptic questions.)[47] Perhaps the *Weltanschauung* thwarting Wittgenstein is one in which skepticism is not deeply worrying or important.[48] Experience as viewed by the pragmatists contains "problems," or as Dewey has taught us to say, "problem situations"; but not the agony of skepticism around which much of traditional philosophy – and Wittgenstein's philosophy as well – is organized.[49]

To Wittgenstein's question "So I can't be wrong about it?" the answer must be complicated. Surely one can imagine circumstances (such as a brain injury and memory loss) that might support the claim that I'm wrong about having never been in Asia Minor. Yet, apart from such abnormal circumstances, the belief's position seems as secure as any; and if we allow "wrong" to generalize to all my secure beliefs then it's not clear what "wrong" means any more. Does this amount to answering: "Yes, I can't be wrong?" Close to it, yet the question and answer are both strange or uncanny. To the second question – "Is there a truth here which I *know*?" Wittgenstein pretty clearly wants to answer "no." This is because the framework propositions are not on the routes of inquiry where knowledge is achieved.

The argument at section 419 of *On Certainty* is repeated at section 421, the paragraph just before Wittgenstein's comment that he is saying something that sounds like pragmatism. He shifts the example, from

not having ever been in Asia Minor, to now being in England: "I am in England. – Everything around me tells me so; wherever and however I let my thoughts turn, they confirm this for me at once. – But might I not be shaken if things such as I don't dream of at present were to happen?" (OC, 421). The paragraph again ends on a skeptical note, raising the possibility of unforeseen happenings that cast doubt on something as obvious and secure as one's belief about what country one is in. Again, there are cases where such a belief might be on the "route of inquiry" – if one is lost near the border between England and Wales for example – but Wittgenstein's case is precisely one in which "wherever and however I let my thoughts turn, they confirm this for me at once." Wittgenstein speaks of confirmation here – as if the thought that he is in England *is* after all on the route of inquiry and could be confirmed. This is perhaps another reason why he says in the next paragraph that what he is saying sounds like pragmatism. It is true that he says his "thoughts," rather than his senses or experience, confirm that he is in England, but he also writes that "everything around me tells me so" – indicating things such as the carpets, the teacups, his chair, and the familiar trees and buildings he sees outside his window. The thought that he is in England, James would say, squares most smoothly – "with a minimum of jolt" – with his ongoing experience.

3

Wittgenstein stated that he was saying something that sounds like pragmatism, and we have now considered some passages from *On Certainty* that support this claim – passages where he speaks of our inherited "world picture" or the "scaffolding of our thoughts" rooted in our practices or deeds. I want next to consider some parallels in a definitive pragmatist text, William James's *Pragmatism*.

In an early chapter of that book, entitled "What Pragmatism Means," James maintains that an individual's beliefs constitute a system, the older parts of which are joined to new ideas in ways that create minimal disturbance:

> The individual has a stock of old opinions already, but he meets a new experience that puts them to a strain. Somebody contradicts them; or in a reflective moment he discovers that they contradict each other; or he hears of facts with

which they are incompatible; or desires arise in him which they cease to satisfy. The result is an inward trouble to which his mind till then had been a stranger, and from which he seeks to escape by modifying his previous mass of opinions. He saves as much of it as he can, for in this matter of belief we are all extreme conservatives. So he tries to change first this opinion, and then that (for they resist change very variously), until at last some new idea comes up which he can graft upon the ancient stock with a minimum of disturbance of the latter....

This new idea is then adopted as the true one.... The most violent revolutions in an individual's beliefs leave most of his old order standing. Time and space, cause and effect, nature and history, and one's own biography remain untouched. New truth is always a go-between, a smoother-over of transitions. It marries old opinion to new fact so as ever to show a minimum of jolt, a maximum of continuity.... [But] individuals will emphasize their points of satisfaction differently. To a certain degree, therefore, everything here is plastic (P, 34–5).

Within the evolving system of our opinions, James holds, most of the "old order" remains standing. Even as we learn new facts and rearrange or revolutionize our theories of things, "we are all extreme conservatives" in regard to certain beliefs. James calls these long and fondly held beliefs those of "common sense," and devotes an entire chapter of *Pragmatism* to them. These "ancient" commonsense beliefs are the equivalent of Wittgenstein's inherited "picture of the world against which I distinguish between true and false," a picture that has served human beings for "unthinkable ages."

James's chapter on "Pragmatism and Common Sense" changes the metaphor but repeats the vision of a tried and true system of knowledge, which grows only at certain points. Our knowledge, he now writes, grows only "*in spots*" (P, 82). It follows that

very ancient modes of thought may have survived through all the later changes in men's opinions.... 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 stage of equilibrium in the human mind's development, the stage of *common sense*" (P, 83).

Notice that James speaks of these ancient beliefs as "discoveries" and "knowledge," whereas Wittgenstein criticizes the idea that our world-picture is a discovery – this would be to confuse what lies along with what lies off the route of inquiry. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein and James

agree in seeing certain "opinions" or "modes of thought" as occupying more or less fixed places in the system. Whereas in "What Pragmatism Means" James had written about each *individual's* stock of opinions, here he writes about "*our* fundamental ways of thinking" and "the human mind's development," chiming with the social cast of Wittgenstein's views.

James names these ancient "ways of thinking," or "concepts": "Thing," "Minds," "Bodies," "One Time," "One Space," "Causal Influences" (P, 85). There is both a Kantian and a pragmatic flavor to this list: in the idea that time, space, causality, and substances or things are basic, James follows Kant, but in the idea that they are tools for "straightening . . . the tangle of our experience's immediate flux, . . . useful *denkmittel* for finding our way," he gives them a pragmatic justification (P, 87–8). Wittgenstein presents the fixed points in the system as a series of propositions; whereas James thinks of them as "categories" and presents them in a list. Yet James's categories of common sense take propositional form too, for each involves an existential claim – that there is one space and one time, that there are things and minds. James sounds like the metaphysician he usually tries to avoid being when he writes: "'Things' do exist, even when we do not see them. Their kinds also exist" (P, 89).[50]

According to James, our ways of thinking have a history: they might have been discovered by "prehistoric geniuses whose names the night of antiquity has covered up; . . . they may have *spread,* until all language rested on them and we are now incapable of thinking naturally in any other terms" (P, 89). James discerns three levels or stages of thought about the world, of which common sense is the oldest and most "*consolidated.*" The others – science and philosophic criticism – are superior for certain spheres of life, but no one of the three is "absolutely more *true* than any other" (P, 92). Anticipating Rorty's linguistic pragmatism (itself formed through a reading of both James and Wittgenstein, among others) James writes of the three levels: "They are all but ways of talking on our part, to be compared solely from the point of view of their *use*" (P, 93). Although our commonsense categories are "built into the very structure of language," they are not immune from all doubt. They may still be "only a collection of extraordinarily successful hypotheses," which, with the advance of science and philosophic thought, may yet be modified (P, 94).

Before turning to some differences between James's and Wittgenstein's views, I want to consider what might seem to be a fundamental difference, but is not. We have seen that for James "everything is plastic," albeit "to a certain degree," and that our commonsense "hypotheses," deeply entrenched in our practice and thought as they are, may still be abandoned. Now Wittgenstein's metaphors of "off the route of inquiry," or "hinges" on which all else depend, seem not to allow for any plasticity whatsoever. A hinge is fixed, and if something is off the route there seems no way for it to move. Remember though, the historical element in Wittgenstein's account. If something is now off the route of inquiry it need not always have been; nor must it continue to be forever. In the paragraphs succeeding section 94 of *On Certainty*, where Wittgenstein discusses the idea of a "Weltbild" or world-picture, he comes to grips with the historical element in his account of necessity by introducing the idea of a river within whose channels our changing beliefs flow:

> The propositions describing this world-picture might be part of a kind of mythology. And their role is like that of rules of a game; and the game can be learned purely practically ("praktisch"), without learning any explicit rules (OC, 95).
>
> It might be imagined that some propositions, of the form of empirical propositions, were hardened and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid propositions hardened, and hard ones became fluid (OC, 96).
>
> But if someone were to say "So logic too is an empirical science" he would be wrong. Yet this is right: the same proposition may get treated at one time as something to test by experience, at another as a rule of testing (OC, 98).

Wittgenstein's world-picture, like James's "ancient stock" of beliefs, has a history, even though its details may be lost in the misty past. Rivers are ancient, but they are not eternal; they follow, as they also confine, the flow of their water. The metaphor of the riverbed brings out the respect in which, for Wittgenstein, even the most fundamental level may be "plastic."

Yet Wittgenstein, the author of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, never abandons his commitment to the idea that his philosophical observations are also logical investigations, and that logic brings a different kind of certainty than most of what we call "knowledge."

This is the first of the differences between Wittgenstein's and James's pragmatism to which I now want to call attention. Wittgenstein's commitment is registered in his reference to "logic" at section 98 of *On Certainty* and in his assertion there that "the same proposition may get treated at one time as something to test by experience, at another as a rule of testing." This is not just the positivist's claim that "we decide" what is logically true, making it for example into a "rule"; for Wittgenstein is quite clear that "decision" does not come into it, that we don't choose our language games (OC, 317), and that language "did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination" (OC, 475). Wittgenstein uses the passive voice in saying that "a proposition may get treated . . . as a rule," allowing it to remain unstated by whom and when this treatment is brought about. I think Bernard Williams is right in arguing that Wittgenstein is not "thinking at all in terms of actual groups of human beings whose activities we might want to understand and explain," but is rather concerned with "finding our way around inside our own view, feeling our way out to the points at which we begin to lose our hold. . . ."[51] The Wittgensteinian "we" is not the contingent "we" of some group or culture, but the "necessary" or "transcendental" we of the human. (Yet Wittgenstein's remarks about logic have a pragmatist sound insofar as they stress its roots in practice. Logic, Wittgenstein suggests in a passage we considered previously, is intertwined with our forms of life, actions, or deeds: "it belongs to the logic of our scientific investigations that certain things are *in deed* not doubted" [OC, 342].)

James has the idea of a system of beliefs, of the tug and resistance of its parts on one another, even the idea that they can "contradict each other." Indeed, it is in *Pragmatism* that he comes closest to recognizing something similar to what Wittgenstein means by logic. Even in *Pragmatism*, though, he writes as if our accommodation of new facts with the least possible disturbance to the system is a matter of setting up a new set of habits, or satisfying desires. The notion of logic is basically foreign to his philosophy. There is nothing in James's writing to match Wittgenstein's idea of an all-pervading logic or grammar, nor his insistence that when one tries to either affirm or deny propositions at the most basic level one produces *nonsense.* What, Wittgenstein asks, would be the point of assuring someone that the earth has existed for more than the last five minutes? I can *utter these words* of course, but what can I do with them, what that is intelligible can I mean by them?[52] At

the "foundations" there is nothing to be said, and the attempt to assert certain propositions or raise certain doubts is undercut at the start:

"Can you be mistaken about this color's being called 'green' in English?" My answer to this can only be 'No'. If I were to say 'Yes, for there's always the possibility of a delusion,' that would mean nothing at all (OC, 624).

A doubt without an end is not even a doubt (OC, 625).

The answer can only be "no" because there is "no possibility" of mistake. But isn't there really a possibility of mistake? It is this skeptical question that Wittgenstein tries to (portray as) undercut. This doubt "would mean nothing at all"; we think it is a real doubt but it is "not even a doubt." It can no more be asserted than it can be doubted or denied.

Wittgenstein offers an historicized picture in which certain doubts and certain statements are nevertheless not possible. Logic, he suggests, shows, but we cannot assert, certain propositions, which are grounded in human action: "Am I not getting closer to saying that in the end logic cannot be described? You must look at the practice of language, then you will see it" (OC, 501). Whatever Wittgenstein's notion of logic comes to, and however we square it with the idea of historical development, it is clear that it strikes a note never sounded by James. Here as elsewhere in his later philosophy, Wittgenstein struggles with the problem of how to register both the historical and the necessary in his account of logic or grammar.[53] This problem simply does not exist for James.

A pragmatist for whom this problem does exist is Hilary Putnam, who signals his concern with conflicting intuitions about necessity in the title of his book *Reason, Truth and History*. Putnam agrees with Wittgenstein and James that we operate from within a set of practices or beliefs: "One can interpret traditions variously, but one cannot apply a word at all if one places oneself entirely outside of the tradition to which it belongs."[54] Yet Putnam also wants to preserve a robust concept of rationality that transcends any particular tradition: "The very fact that we speak of our different conceptions as different conceptions of *rationality* posits a *Grenzbegriff*, a limit-concept of the ideal truth."[55] Perhaps Wittgenstein has a picture of pragmatists as empiricists all the way down, with no rational constraints on our picture of the world – a picture that fits James, but not Putnam.[56]

James does offer an account of logic in the final chapter of *The Principles of Psychology,* but it is a psychological and materialistic account. He criticizes those such as Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill who hold that logic merely reflects the course of our experience. Logic, James argues, has an unalterability and solidity that no mere experience could give it. This is, however, explained by a "native structure" of the mind that is grounded in "the inner forces which have made the brain grow" (PP, 1268). As Ellen Kappy Suckiel puts it, James finds our basic categories "embodied in the structure of our brains."[57] Logic for James is just "the way we think" – a way of understanding it that, from Wittgenstein's perspective, is a fatal first step.

If Wittgenstein's commitment to logic sets him apart from James, then James's commitment to science (to be more fully discussed in Chapter 3) sets him apart from Wittgenstein. This then is the second difference between them to which I want to draw attention. Now for our purposes we need to remember that James was a physiologist and psychologist before turning to philosophy, and that he often thought of his projects as a blend of science and philosophy – for example, in his anticipation in *Varieties of Religious Experience* of a "'Science of Religions,'" that would resolve the question of divinity in the universe (VRE, 389). On the other hand, Wittgenstein, both early and late, sees science as completely separate from philosophy. "Philosophy is not one of the natural sciences," he writes in the *Tractatus*: "The word 'philosophy' must mean something whose place is above or below the natural sciences, not beside them (TLP, 4.111).[58] And in the *Investigations* he affirms: "It was true to say that our considerations could not be scientific ones. . . . we may not advance any kind of theory. . . . We must do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place" (PI, 109). James shares with the logical positivists of Wittgenstein's day the idea that philosophy could – and should – become more scientific. This is, I think, part of the *Weltanschuang* to which Wittgenstein felt opposed.

For James, the justification for our beliefs is empirical, all the way down, in any context:

> Truth lives, in fact, for the most part on a credit system. Our thoughts and beliefs 'pass', so long as nothing challenges them, just as bank-notes pass so long as nobody refuses them. But this all points to direct face-to-face

verifications somewhere, without which the fabric of truth collapses like a financial system with no cash-basis whatever. You accept my verification of one thing, I yours of another. We trade on each other's truth. But beliefs verified concretely by *somebody* are the posts of the whole superstructure (P, 100).

For Wittgenstein, doubt and testing come to an end too, at the level of "certainty" or "logical/grammatical truth," of the riverbanks and hinges. But Wittgenstein insists that we are then no longer in the domain of hypothesis testing or ratiocination, but of something more "animal," active, even instinctive:

. . . the end is not an ungrounded presupposition: it is an ungrounded way of acting (OC, 110).

It is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game (OC, 204).[59]

This game proves its worth. That may be the cause of its being played, but it is not the ground (OC, 474).

I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct [Instinkt] but not ratiocination [Raisonnement]. As a creature in a primitive state. Any logic good enough for a primitive means of communication needs no apology from us. Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination (OC, 475).

Whereas James holds that our most basic beliefs are ultimately grounded in scientific inquiry, Wittgenstein finds that our "way of acting" is "ungrounded." He does not say, as foundationalists like Russell or James might have said of sense-data, that they provide their own ground, or that judgments about them are incorrigible. If Wittgenstein finds a ground, it lies in the framework or system of our action, rather than in any element within it: the foundation walls are carried by the whole house; and the truth of certain propositions belongs to our frame of reference (OC, 83).[60] Yet Wittgenstein strikes a skeptical note at the same time that our search for an ultimate ground is put to rest, for the language game is "unpredictable, . . . not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable). It is there – like our life" (OC, 559).[61]

We do not learn the language games constituting our frame of reference by explanation, for if we can understand an explanation we already have language. One thing deeply wrong with the Augustinian picture of language presented in the first paragraph of

the *Investigations* is that it suggests that we learn language through definition – ostensive definitions of words. As Wittgenstein observes, in "giving explanations I already have to use language full-blown (not some sort of preparatory, provisional one);" (PI, 120). For this reason, Cavell speaks not of our being taught but of our being initiated[62] into language, an initiation that is at the same time an initiation into a fundamental, if ordinary, ontology: "In 'learning language' you learn not merely what the names of things are, but what a name is; not merely what the form of expression is for expressing a wish, but what expressing a wish is; not merely what the word for 'father' is, but what a father is; not merely what the word for 'love' is, but what love is."[63] Learning a language is learning these forms of human life.

If Wittgenstein tells a story of initiation, James tells a story of scientific progress, in which not only are our beliefs justified by science, but something similar to science is their source. James writes, for example, that our commonsense beliefs "may have been *discovered* by prehistoric geniuses." Wittgenstein, on the contrary, insists that we do not arrive at our most basic beliefs by inquiry or ratiocination. His basic point appears at section 94 of *On Certainty*: "I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness. . . ." Wittgenstein's point against the sort of story James tells is that our basic beliefs are rooted in something deeper than investigation, which – as we first noticed previously – he calls "animal" or "instinct." In effect, Wittgenstein is saying that the James of *Pragmatism* overintellectualizes the story of how we arrive at our "commonsense" beliefs.

James does agree that much of our picture of the world is not arrived at by *science*, for he makes clear that science is a later development than common sense. He agrees that we inherit a set of cultural heirlooms and that no one currently is testing these beliefs. (Wittgenstein and James have similar conceptions of the age of these fundamental beliefs.) Yet Wittgenstein wants to regard man "as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct but not ratiocination. As a creature in a primitive state."[64] James credits "prehistoric geniuses" with what should perhaps be credited to evolution, including the evolution of culture.

Consider in this light a series of remarks late in Part 1 of *Philosophical Investigations* that culminate in a discussion of certainty. Wittgenstein considers the utility of our mental life – at first the utility of "thinking,"

then the utility of beliefs like "the belief in the uniformity of nature." Throughout, his point is to deny that these beliefs or practices must be based on an investigation into, or a determination about, their utility:

> Does man think, then, because he has found that thinking pays? – because he thinks it advantageous to think?
>
> (Does he bring his children up because he has found it pays?) (PI, 467). What would show *why* he thinks? (PI, 468).
>
> And yet one can say that thinking has been found to pay. That there are fewer boiler explosions than formerly, now that we no longer go by feeling in deciding the thickness of the walls, but make such-and-such calculations instead. Or since each calculation done by one engineer got checked by a second one (PI, 469).
>
> So we do *sometimes* think because it has been found to pay (PI, 470).

Wittgenstein's target here is a reductionistic view, according to which everything we do, including our thinking, is done because it pays. Now something close to this view is set forth by James in *Pragmatism*'s chapter on truth. Truths, James states, have only in common "that they pay," and their paying does *not* consist in their correspondence to some absolute reality:

> They pay by guiding us into or towards some part of a system that dips at numerous points into sense-percepts, which we may copy mentally or not, but with which at any rate we are now in the kind of commerce vaguely designated as verification. Truth for us is simply a collective name for verification-processes, just as health, wealth, strength, etc., are names for other processes connected with life, and also pursued because it pays to pursue them (P, 104).

In the passages from *Philosophial Investigations* cited previously, Wittgenstein resists the view that we think because it pays to do so. Yet he is also inclined to say that certain ways of thinking do pay, and that their goodness consists in their working – or rather in our being able to work with them. He writes: "The picture of the earth as a ball is a *good* picture, it proves itself everywhere, it is also a simple picture – in short, we work (arbeiten) with it without doubting it" (OC, 147). Here again his remark can be said to "sound like pragmatism."

What then is Wittgenstein's reservation about the view that thinking pays? In part, it stems from the sense that our certainties are rooted in habits and instincts, emotions and actions, rather than in some uniformly pragmatic principle. They are not, as James

thinks, "discoveries"; or as Moore thinks, "knowledge." Consider how Wittgenstein continues the *Investigations* discussion cited previously:

> The character of the belief in the uniformity of nature can perhaps be seen most clearly in the case in which we fear what we expect. Nothing could induce me to put my hand into a flame – although after all it is *only in the past* that I have burnt myself (PI, 472).
>
> The belief that fire will burn me is of the same kind as the fear that it will burn me (PI, 473).
>
> I shall get burnt if I put my hand in the fire: that is certainty. That is to say: here we see the meaning of certainty. (What it amounts to, not just the meaning of the word 'certainty') (PI, 474).

I don't need a reason to fear the fire, though there are certainly some available if I chose to look. Fearing the fire is simply what I do (having been burnt), and my belief rides on or is interwined with an unreasoned response.

The irony in Wittgenstein's implicit criticism of pragmatism for overintellectualizing our belief system can be brought out by considering a passage from the chapter entitled "Instinct" in *The Principles of Psychology,* where James writes:

> Why do men always lie down, when they can, on soft beds rather than on hard floors? Why do they sit round the stove on a cold day? Why, in a room, do they place themselves, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, with their faces toward its middle rather than to the wall? . . . Nothing more can be said than that these are human ways, and that every creature *likes* its own ways, and takes to the following them as a matter of course. Science may come and consider these ways, and find that most of them are useful. But it is not for the sake of their utility that they are followed . . . (PP, 1007).

This is exactly Wittgenstein's point in the previous *Investigations* passages. Perhaps, from Wittgenstein's perspective, James would have done better in *Pragmatism* to remember the instinctive layer of our mental life that he had explored so tellingly in his earlier masterpiece on human psychology.

We have been considering two varieties of pragmatic experience: two depictions of a web of belief rooted in a deep layer of human practice. And we have considered some of the differences between Wittgenstein's and James's depictions and explorations of the web, centering around the various roles of skepticism, logic, science, and

instinct. I shall return to the story of Wittgenstein's relation to pragmatism in my final chapter, and, from time to time in the intervening discussions of his long engagement with the writings of William James. One of several ironies in this story is that something that "sounds like" the pragmatism Russell and Moore so ferociously attacked in 1909 – and which Wittgenstein read about in Russell's *Philosophical Essays* and James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* during his first years in Cambridge – reappears in the course of Wittgenstein's criticisms of Moore in 1949–51. Another is that Wittgenstein spent so much time with the greatest book of a founding pragmatist writer – James's *Principles* – without once acknowledging, when considering his own pragmatism, his indebtedness to William James.

2

Wittgenstein and *The Varieties of Religious Experience*

> "The outward face of nature need not alter, but the expressions of meaning in it alter" (VRE, 424)
>
> " . . . we may very likely find no one essence, but many characters which may alternately be equally important in religion" (VRE, 32)

1

After the publication of his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* in 1921, Wittgenstein abandoned philosophy. He taught elementary school in a small village in Austria and helped design a house in Vienna for his sister, preserving the philosophical "silence" he thought appropriate both to ethics and to a work of philosophy offering "the final solution of the problems" (TLP, 5). By the mid-1920s, however, he was working on philosophy again, convinced that the *Tractatus* contained major mistakes. He returned to Cambridge in 1929, where he composed a paper on logical form that he soon repudiated, and, toward year's end, a "Lecture on Ethics."

In that first year back in Cambridge, Wittgenstein met a young student of philosophy, Maurice O'Connor Drury, who was to become a lifelong friend. Drury was one of those serious, unpretentious people whom Wittgenstein tolerated, sought out, and opened up to. Originally planning on the priesthood, Drury became a physician and a psychiatrist at St. Patrick's Hospital in Dublin. It was to Drury's flat in Dublin that Wittgenstein came when he left Austria in 1938; and

again in 1948 after he resigned his Cambridge professorship.[1] Drury was with Wittgenstein when he died in 1951.[2]

On their second meeting, Wittgenstein and Drury took a walk to the small village of Madingley, outside Cambridge, during which the forty-one-year-old author of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* – officially enrolled under Frank Ramsey as a Ph.D. student – told the twenty-three-year-old undergraduate philosophy student about his childhood fears, induced by a pattern of fallen plaster in the lavatory of his home. He still suffered from these fears while a student at Manchester in 1910, Wittgenstein continued: "You will think I am crazy, you will think I have gone mad, when I tell you that only religious feelings are a cure for such fears."[3] The following year, over tea in Drury's rooms, Wittgenstein (as recounted by Drury)

went over to look at my books. Picking up a volume of Spinoza's letters,
WITTGENSTEIN: "These letters are most interesting, particularly when he is writing about the beginnings of natural science. – Spinoza ground lenses. I think this must have been an enormous help to him when he needed a rest from thinking. I wish I had a similar occupation when I can't get on with my work."
DRURY: "I have just been reading a chapter in Schopenhauer entitled "Man's Need for Metaphysics." I think Schopenhauer is saying something very important in that chapter."
WITTGENSTEIN: "Man's need for Metaphysics. I think I can see very well what Schopenhauer got out of his philosophy. Don't think I despise metaphysics. I regard some of the great philosophical systems of the past as among the noblest productions of the human mind. For some people it would require an heroic effort to give up this sort of writing."
DRURY: "I have to read as my special authors for the second part of my Tripos, Leibniz and Lotze."
WITTGENSTEIN: "Count yourself lucky to have so much time to study such a great man as Leibniz. Make sure you use this time when you still have leisure *well.* The mind gets stiff long before the body does."
DRURY: "I find Lotze very heavy going, very dull."
WITTGENSTEIN: "Probably a man who shouldn't have been allowed to write philosophy. A book you should read is William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*; that was a book that helped me a lot at one time."
DRURY: "Oh yes, I have read that. I always enjoy reading anything of William James. He is such a human person."
WITTGENSTEIN: "That is what makes him a good philosopher; he was a real human being."[4]

The context for the striking contrast between Lotze – who shouldn't have been allowed to write philosophy – and the American William James – a good philosopher because he was a real human being – is a survey of the greats of philosophy by the author of the *Tractatus*: Leibniz, Spinoza, and Schopenhauer. What is Wittgenstein saying about James? He echoes his postcard to Russell (*Varieties* did him "a lot of good") in saying to Drury that it "helped me a lot at one time." Wittgenstein's language ("at one time") suggests that his reading of *Varieties* was in the past, during a period of psychological uncertainty and transition perhaps; but his statement also demonstrates that the book was high on his "all time" list of important *philosophical* books – something worth studying by a bright undergraduate before the mind gets "stiff."

Why did Wittgenstein think James was such a good philosopher? Because he was a "real human being." What he and Drury were agreeing to was not something based on personal acquaintance with James of course, for James died in 1910, two years before Wittgenstein first read *Varieties*. The claim that James was a human being or "such a human person" is justified by James's writing, with which Drury expresses some familiarity ("I always enjoy reading anything of William James"). The claim that one may tell that someone is a "real human being" through his writing is the claim Emerson made of Montaigne's *Essays* when he wrote: "cut these words and they would bleed; they are vascular and alive."[5] It is a remark about writing as the expression of a person. In philosophy as James and Wittgenstein practice it, this is a person who invites reflection.

We might also think of Wittgenstein's remark that James was a good philosopher because he was a real human being as a remark about James's voice. For James is a strong presence in his writing not only as a character on the stage of his narration, but as a pervading sound or presence in his language. Cut these words, and they bleed William James.

This William James is on display in the opening words of *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* originally given as the Gifford Lectures at Edinburgh:

It is with no small amount of trepidation that I take my place behind this desk, and face this learned audience. . . . It seems the natural thing for us to listen

whilst the Europeans talk. The contrary habit, of talking whilst the Europeans listen, we have not yet acquired; and in him who first makes the adventure it begets a certain sense of apology being due for so presumptuous an act (VRE, 11).

Here is the charming, disarmingly modest Jamesian narrator – the tour guide to the phenomena – found throughout James's works. In *Varieties,* the phenomena are religious experiences, although the book's subtitle – "A Study in Human Nature" – is appropriate for many of James's writings. Although *Varieties* contains a chapter on "Philosophy" and engaged Wittgenstein's attention as a great work of philosophy, James portrays himself for the most part as a psychologist; psychology being "the only branch of learning in which I am particularly versed. To the psychologist the religious propensities of man must be at least as interesting as any other of the facts pertaining to his mental constitution" (VRE, 12). One of the marks of James's humanity as a writer – here as elsewhere in his works and in his life – is his shifting among such professional identities as psychologist, physiologist, and philosopher.

The tour guide reveals something of himself. A main distinction of the book is between "the religion of healthy-mindedness" – practiced by those who "look on everything and see that it is good" – and the religion of the "sick souls" – those who find a fundamental terror, emptiness, or evil at the heart of existence. The journey of life for the sick soul – Augustine, Tolstoy, and the Buddhists are some of James's examples – is to overcome this "emptiness." Even before this distinction is officially introduced, however, James suggests that he sees himself among these sick souls. Discussing the "psychopathic" origins of many religious states, he argues that simply because these states are in some way abnormal, it does not follow that they fail to inform us about the world. But he puts the point with a confiding inclusiveness: "Few of us are not in some way infirm, or even diseased; and our very infirmities help us unexpectedly" (VRE, 30). Pressing his epistemological point, James writes that the psychopathic temperament might

introduce one to regions of religious truth, to corners of the universe, which your robust Philistine type of nervous system, forever offering its biceps to be felt, thumping its breast, and thanking Heaven that it hasn't a single morbid

fibre in its composition, would be sure to hide forever from its self-satisfied possessors (VRE, 30–1).

James stands aside from "*your*. . . Philistine type of nervous system," but he speaks of the unexpected help provided by "*our*. . . infirmities."

James again suggests that he occupies a position in his own classificatory scheme near the end of *Varieties*' second chapter, entitled, dryly enough, "Circumscription of the Topic." James considers the idea of a variety of attitudes toward life by contrasting Stoic and Christian "emotional mood[s]": There is "a frosty chill," to the words of Marcus Aurelius, he states, that is found "rarely in a Jewish, and never in a Christian piece of religious writing" (VRE, 45). Contrasting the Christian with a representative nonChristian "moralist," James finds that although both may lead lives of service to others, cultivating "cheerful manners" and a dignified silence about their miseries, yet the moralist

must hold his breath and keep his muscles tense; and so long as this athletic attitude is possible all goes well – morality suffices. But the athletic attitude tends ever to break down, and it inevitably does break down even in the most stalwart when the organism begins to decay, or when morbid fears invade the mind. To suggest personal will and effort to one all sicklied o'er with the sense of irremediable impotence is to suggest the most impossible of things. What he craves is to be consoled in his very powerlessness, to feel that the spirit of the universe recognizes and secures him, all decaying and failing as he is. Well, we are all such helpless failures in the last resort. The sanest and best of us are of one clay with lunatics and prison inmates, and death finally runs the robustest of us down" (VRE, 49).

We know from James's letters and from several excellent studies of his life that he suffered from his own set of "morbid fears," one of which is described in the account of an anonymous "correspondent" in *Varieties* (VRE, 150). Regardless of what we know from such sources, we can say that within the text of *Varieties,* a distinguished philosopher and psychologist acknowledges himself as in some way a "helpless failure." The Wittgenstein who suffered from "morbid fears" when living in Manchester in 1911[6] would no doubt have agreed with James on the shortcomings of "the athletic attitude" in the face of such fears when he read *Varieties* the following year.

That reading – these readings actually – are referred to in a postcard Wittgenstein sent to Bertrand Russell in July, 1912, the summer after he first came to Cambridge to study philosophy. Wittgenstein writes:

> Whenever I have time now I read James's *Varieties of Religious Experience.* This book does me a *lot* of good. I don't mean to say that I will be a saint soon, but I am not sure that it does not improve me a little in a way in which I would like to improve very much; namely I think that it helps me to get rid of the Sorge (in the sense in which Goethe used the word in the 2nd part of Faust.)[7]

This postcard comes from the same moody and pensive undergraduate to whom Russell addressed the question "Are you thinking of logic or of your sins?" and who replied "Both."[8] The postcard indicates repeated readings, as if James's text became for him almost a sacred book, or at least a valued advisor. Wittgenstein reads the book not to "find out how it ends" but to "improve" himself. He did not just read *Varieties*; he became a *reader* of it – as someone who discovers Beethoven's symphonies does not just listen to them once, but becomes their listener, their student.

James's discussions of the sick soul, the religion of healthy mindedness, conversion, mysticism, and philosophy did Wittgenstein "a lot of good," perhaps, by offering him a sense of intellectual and spiritual companionship with another "sick soul." Consider the following passage from James's chapter on "The Sick Soul":

> [T]ake the happiest man, the one most envied by the world, and in nine cases out of ten his inmost consciousness is one of failure. . . .
>
> "I will say nothing," writes Goethe in 1824, "against the course of my existence. But at bottom it has been nothing but pain and burden, and I can affirm that during the whole of my 75 years, I have not had four weeks of genuine well-being. It is but the perpetual rolling of a rock that must be raised up again Forever" (VRE, 129).[9]

Coming from a highly cultured background in Vienna to the English-speaking world at Manchester and then at Cambridge, Wittgenstein found in James a wise surveyor of humanity in both its individual and its cultural manifestations, a philosopher who knew German, French, Italian, and English culture.[10] When Wittgenstein told Drury in 1929 that "only religious feelings are a cure for such fears" as he had when at Manchester, he suggests that he had benefited from such a cure – a

cure of the sort he read about in 1912, and acknowledged having undergone in 1929, in the "Lecture on Ethics."

However, *Varieties* offered Wittgenstein more than discussions of some deep issues of his life; it offered him material for philosophical projects on which he was engaged. The few notebooks left from Wittgenstein's pre-Tractarian period, for example, show him wrestling with such questions as: "How can a man be happy at all, since he cannot ward off the misery of the world?" (N, 81). In Jamesian terms, this is the question: How can the sick soul be reborn or converted? In a remark that, with a minor modification, makes its way into the *Tractatus,* Wittgenstein wrote: "The world of the happy is a different world from that of the unhappy" (N, 77). With its objective – not merely subjective – claim about "a different world," this statement fits James's cases of "the objective change the world often appears to undergo" (VRE, 228) in certain religious experiences. James mentions, for example, Jonathan Edwards's statement that after his conversion the "appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost everything" (VRE, 229). The "unhappy world," on the other hand, appears "remote, strange, sinister, uncanny. Its color is gone, its breath is cold, there is no speculation in the eyes it glares with." The inhabitant of such a world finds that there is no meaningful past, that "people appear so strange," that "everything floats before [one's] eyes, but leaves no impression" (VRE, 142).

James raises, and in his concluding chapter, tries to answer, the question of what these experiences reveal about "reality." By thinking of the world as happy or unhappy depending on the state of the person whose world it is, Wittgenstein builds an answer to this question into the *Tractatus.* Although in one sense "The world is all that is the case" (TLP, 1), in another sense "'the world is my world'" (TLP, 5.641). James's catalogue of religous experiences help us understand – and perhaps helped Wittgenstein understand – this second sense.

In the *Tractatus,* Wittgenstein writes of answers "that cannot be put into words" (TLP, 6.5) and of those to whom the sense of life suddenly becomes clear "after a long period of doubt" (TLP, 6.521). One such person is Leo Tolstoy, an important exemplar for Wittgenstein as for James.[11] James makes extensive use of Tolstoy's *A Confession* in his discussion of the sick soul, where he recounts Tolstoy's increasing

sense of perplexity and meaninglessness around his fiftieth year, and his conclusion that "one can live only so long as one is intoxicated, drunk with life; but when one grows sober one cannot fail to see that it is all a stupid cheat" (VRE, 144).[12] Once one has experienced such disillusionment, James writes,

> the happiness of Eden never comes again. The happiness that comes, when any does come . . . is not the simple ignorance of ill, but something vastly more complex, including natural evil as one of its elements, but finding natural evil no such stumbling-block and terror because it now sees it swallowed up in supernatural good. The process is one of redemption, not of mere reversion to natural health, and the sufferer, when saved, is saved by what seems to him a second birth, a deeper kind of conscious being than he could enjoy before (VRE, 146).

The reborn person's "happiness" includes "natural evil as one of its elements." Or as Wittgenstein put it, he is "happy in spite of the misery of the world" (N, 81).

Tolstoy's case shows that deep melancholy or despair may be followed by conversion, not that it must be. Certainly, James stresses, conversion is not subject to will or to influence through knowledge. Like love and other emotions, religious experience is mysteriously uncontrollable:

> If it comes, it comes; if it does not come, no process of reasoning can force it. Yet it transforms the value of the creature loved as utterly as the sunrise transforms Mont Blanc from a corpse-like gray to a rosy enchantment; and it sets the whole world to a new tune for the lover and gives a new issue to his life. So with fear, with indignation, jealousy, ambition, worship. If they are there, life changes (VRE, 141).

The depiction of a transformed world aligns this passage with portions of the *Tractatus* discussed previously, while the passivity to which James points in the phrase "if it comes, it comes" coheres with Wittgenstein's ruminations on the strange power of the will to "alter the limits of the world" (TLP, 6.43). Wittgenstein writes of "those who have found after a long period of doubt that the sense of life became clear to them" that they "have then been unable to say what constituted that sense" (TLP, 6.521). As James says, "no process of reasoning" can force, or explain, this new sense of life. "There are, indeed," Wittgenstein continues, "things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest.* They are what is mystical" (TLP, 6.522).

For Wittgenstein, only "facts" can be expressed by means of language. The "different worlds" of the happy and unhappy man are not different because they contain different facts – no more than Tolstoy's melancholy outlook and his more happy accepting outlook reveal or incorporate different facts. (In both, he is fifty years old, with a family, living in Russia, etc.) Despite the crystalline structures depicted and the austerity of the prose of his "logico-philosophical" book, Wittgenstein manages to weave these human religious phenomena into the general Tractarian narrative of what can and what cannot be said. The most important things, Wittgenstein held, are not facts, but things that can only be shown.[13]

James discusses things that can't be said near the end of his book too, in the chapter entitled "Mysticism" that precedes the chapter entitled "Philosophy." It opens with James's pioneering definition of mystical states of consciousness as characterized by "ineffability," "noetic quality," "transiency," and "passivity." The first of these corresponds to Wittgenstein's "mystical," for as James explains, those who have had a mystical experience report that it "defies expression, that no adequate report of its contents can be given in words" (VRE, 343).

James's album of descriptions of, and reflections on, human experiences of the world's worth, meaning, or significance thus anticipates the closing themes of Wittgenstein's great philosophical book. Nor is James's relevance strictly confined to "the religious," for the phenomena he discusses – like Wittgenstein's "worlds of the happy and the unhappy man" – are continuous with our ordinary, nonreligious experience:

> apart from anything acutely religious, we all have moments when the universal life seems to wrap us round with friendliness. In youth and health, in summer, in the woods or on the mountains, there come days when the weather seems all whispering with peace, hours when the goodness and beauty of existence enfold us like a dry warm climate, or chime through us as if our inner ears were subtly ringing with the world's security (VRE, 252).

There are days when, in the words of the *Tractatus,* we alter "the limits of the world," so that "it becomes an altogether different world . . ." (TLP, 6.43).

Wittgenstein portrays the "different world" as a difference in "the limits of the world." By speaking of *the world's* limits, he connotes

something worldly, hence "objective"; and by speaking of the world as "my world" and of the role of the will in forming the world's limits, he gives the world a subjective, or perhaps it is better to say, human, tinge or aspect. In Tractarian psychology – discarded in the thirties – Wittgenstein distinguishes the "empirical" or "psychological" self that catches the 9:30 train, writes the check to the telephone company, and has friends living in England, from the self that alters the world's limits. He thinks – just as other writers in the Kantian tradition[14] – that this "philosophical" self can be addressed by philosophy, not by empirical psychology:

> Thus there really is a sense in which philosophy can talk about the self in a non-psychological way.
>
> What brings the self into philosophy is the fact that 'the world is my world'. The philosophical self is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world – not a part of it (TLP, 5.641).

This distinction between the empirical and philosophical self corresponds to James's distinction in *Varieties* between our "casual" and our "total" "reactions" on, or "attitudes" toward, life:

> Total reactions are different from casual reactions, and total attitudes are different from usual or professional attitudes. To get at them you must go behind the foreground of existence and reach down to that curious sense of the whole residual cosmos as an everlasting presence, intimate or alien, terrible or amusing, lovable or odious, which in some degree everyone possesses. This sense of the world's presence, appealing as it does to our peculiar individual temperament, makes us either strenuous or careless, devout or blasphemous, gloomy or exultant, about life at large; and our reaction, involuntary and inarticulate and often half unconscious as it is, is the completest of all our answers to the question, "What is the character of this universe in which we dwell?" (VRE, 39).

For Wittgenstein, as for James, these attitudes toward the world have metaphysical weight; they are our most intimate and sincere answers to the question of the "character of this universe in which we dwell." For all its contributions to logic and philosophy of language, and its ontology of "eternal" "objects," the *Tractatus* tries, in its economical way, to come to grips with the deeper ranges of contingent human feeling spoken of by James. "Feeling the world as a limited whole – ," Wittgenstein writes, "it is this that is mystical" (TLP, 6.45).

Wittgenstein returned to "the mystical" in the year he first met Maurice Drury, when he delivered a lecture – "the only 'popular' lecture he ever gave in his life"[15] – to a Cambridge society known as "The Heretics." Although his views on meaning and logic were undergoing fundamental changes at this time, he was concerned in this "Lecture on Ethics" to defend, not alter, the ethical position of the *Tractatus*; and to counter the widespread tendency to treat his book as a work of positivism.

Wittgenstein begins the lecture by explaining that although his subject is "Ethics," he will use the term in a wide sense, so as to include much of what is conventionally called "Aesthetics," and also, it turns out, religion. (He had written in the *Tractatus* that ethics and aesthetics are "one and the same" [TLP, 6.421].) Ethics, Wittgenstein writes, "is the enquiry into what is valuable, or, into what is really important, or . . . into the meaning of life; or into what makes life worth living, or into the right way of living." Maintaining the strict Tractarian separation between facts and values, the world and what lies at the limit of the world, Wittgenstein distinguishes between "absolute" values or absolute good, on the one hand, and relatively good or valuable states of affairs on the other. A good chair, for example, is good for the purposes of chairs: "the word good in the relative sense simply means coming up to a certain predetermined standard" (LE, 38). The absolute sense of good, however, is independent of all facts and standards: "No state of affairs has, in itself, what I would like to call the coercive power of an absolute judge."

The verbal expressions we are tempted to use in regard to these matters of ethics are, Wittgenstein maintains in the "Lecture" as in the *Tractatus,* "nonsense." "Our words used as we use them in science, are vessels capable only of containing and conveying meaning and sense, *natural* meaning and sense. Ethics, if it is anything, is supernatural and our words will only express facts; . . ." (LE, 40). (This is a view Wittgenstein would undermine in *Philosophical Investigations.*) Rather than giving up the attempt to say anything further about "what makes life worth living" or about "absolute value," Wittgenstein instead – in a tactic anticipating his method in the *Investigations* – considers the situations in which we are tempted to use these "nonsensical expressions" (LE, 44). These situations, Wittgenstein states, are a response to certain "experiences," some of which he has had. One of these he

describes as wondering at the existence of the world – not at this or that fact or object or event, but at the world's very existence. Another he describes as the experience of feeling *absolutely* safe: "I mean the state of mind in which one is inclined to say 'I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens"' (LE, 41).

Just as James in *Varieties of Religious Experience,* Wittgenstein here uses the term "experience" (the "Lecture" was composed in English); and, just like James's mystic, Wittgenstein finds inadequate anything that he or others are tempted to say about such experiences. James describes the central characteristic of religious rebirth as "the loss of all the worry, the sense that all is ultimately well with one, the peace, the harmony, the *willingness to be,* even though the outer conditions should remain the same" (VRE, 228). Wittgenstein was searching for and inquiring about such experiences of absolute safety, of willingness to be, to use the Jamesean term, in the summer and fall of 1916. And it seems, on the basis of his own testimony and no matter how temporarily, he had found such anchoring points by the time of the "Lecture on Ethics." For he writes there that experiences such as that of absolute safety "seem to those who have experienced them, for instance to me, to have in some sense an intrinsic, absolute value" (LE, 43).

Wittgenstein ends his "Lecture on Ethics" by contrasting "the experience of seeing the world as a miracle," and the "scientific way of looking at a fact." The experiences he recalls might be described as "seeing the world as a miracle." The miracle, however, is not a new fact. For any fact can, at least potentially, be explained scientifically, and "the scientific way of looking at a fact is not the way to look at it as a miracle" (LE, 43). Despite finding that any verbal expression of the difference between these attitudes or ways of looking at the world is "nonsense," and that such expressions do "not add to our knowledge in any sense," Wittgenstein concludes his "Lecture" by writing that these expressions represent "a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply . . ." (LE, 44).

James obviously respects these tendencies in the human mind as well, but what is less often seen about James is his ambivalence about science. Although he thought of his lectures on religious experience as possibly contributing to a future science of religions – something that Wittgenstein would have found completely misguided – he was a serious critic of the limitations of science. In the "Conclusion" to

Varieties he writes: "Today, quite as much as at any previous age, the religious individual tells you that the divine meets him on the basis of his personal concerns. Science, on the other hand, has ended by utterly repudiating the personal point of view" (VRE, 440). Running through James's entire career, from *The Principles of Psychology,* through *The Will to Believe, Pragmatism,* and *A Pluralistic Universe,* lies a strain of thought that credits this "personal point of view" with a validity alongside of, and not reducible to that of science. Wittgenstein explicitly adopts that point of view in his "Lecture on Ethics" where he speaks of his own experiences and attitudes. Discussing the "Lecture" with his friend and colleague Friedrich Waismann, Wittgenstein stated: "At the end of my lecture on ethics, I spoke in the first person. I believe that is quite essential. Here nothing more can be established, I can only appear as a person speaking for myself."[16]

2

"The world" as described in the *Tractatus* is an objective array of facts bounded by logic – with the important but unutterable mystical beyond. Human subjects can alter the limits of their worlds, but the possibilities of their language are given by a set of "eternal" "objects" or meanings. The *Tractatus* portrays logic as "crystalline . . . the hardest thing there is" (PI, 97). Our human logical languages and practices, Wittgenstein holds, are just reflections of the independent logical form pervading the world:

> Propositions cannot represent logical form: it is mirrored in them.
> What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent.
> What expresses *itself* in language, we cannot express by means of language.
> Propositions *show* the logical form of reality.
> They display it (TLP, 4.121).

Tractarian philosophy has the critical task of showing those who want "to say something metaphysical" that their words are without meaning (TLP, 6.53). Yet philosophy can "signify" or indicate what lies beyond the bounds of logic: "It will signify what cannot be said, by presenting clearly what can be said" (TLP, 4.115).

In his later philosophy, Wittgenstein shifts to a more anthropomorphic or humanized account of language and logic, and to a more

informal and exploratory, less "objective" – if no less meticulous – style. In the remainder of this chapter I want to consider some ways in which this new, more human and contingent, approach is foreshadowed in James's *Varieties.* For even before Wittgenstein was developing his Tractarian philosophy, he was assimilating ideas and methods of James that were to serve as its antidote, ideas and methods that lay dormant until Wittgenstein had produced the philosophical work to which they could fruitfully be applied.

After *Varieties*' chapters on "Conversion," "Saintliness," "The Value of Saintliness," and "Mysticism," James includes a chapter entitled "Philosophy." Here and in the final chapter, "Conclusions," he engages traditional philosophical approaches to religion, and offers a statement of his own position. He maintains that, quite apart from religious experience, "there is actually and literally more life in our total soul than we are at any time aware of." This "more" includes "imperfect memories and silly jingles" (VRE, 457), but also the more profound experiences of, and attitudes toward, life that James surveys in the body of the book. Although there is no proof of the claim that religious experiences actually are, as they seem to some of those who have them, "union with the power beyond us," this remains a possibility that James finds plausible (VRE, 458).[17]

James also turns his gaze on philosophy, and this is the first point of affinity between *Varieties* and Wittgenstein's later philosophy to which I would like to draw attention. For James argues that philosophical theorizing – much like religion – is an outgrowth of the human mind. He began *Varieties* by announcing that his subject was "not religious institutions, but rather religious feelings and religious impulses" (VRE, 12), and he now considers philosophies as the products of "feelings" and "impulses." Our philosophies too are "secondary products, like translations of a text into another tongue" (VRE, 387).

James's immediate subject is philosophy in its guise as provider of proofs for the existence of God and, more generally, "the pretensions of philosophy to found religion on universal reason." His concluding statement reaches farther, however, to philosophy as a whole. Philosophy

> founds schools and sects just as feeling does. The logical reason of man operates, in short, in this field of divinity exactly as it has always operated in love, or in patriotism, or in politics, or in any other of the wider affairs of life, in

which our passions or our mystical intuitions fix our beliefs beforehand. It finds arguments for our conviction, for indeed it *has* to find them. It amplifies and defines our faith, and dignifies it and lends it words and plausibility. It hardly ever engenders it; it cannot now secure it (VRE, 391, 392).

In this passage, James places himself in something like the position occupied by Wittgenstein in the *Investigations*: the surveyor not just of "the logical reason of man," but the diagnostician of "our beliefs beforehand," our prejudices. The logical reason of man, James tells us, "*has* to find" arguments for its conviction. Philosophy, part of this "logical reason of man," is often caught in the play of passions and fixated thought; but it may also occupy the position James occupies, among but somehow outside the contending hypotheses: "moderator amid the clash of hypotheses, and mediator among the criticisms of one man's constructions by another..." (VRE, 389). This mediating position of James, rather than any particular doctrine, may have been the most fateful feature of his thought for the young Wittgenstein.

Now this mediating position is specifically identified as that of the pragmatist in *Pragmatism,* where the pragmatist is said to practice a "mediating way of thinking" (P, 26) among theories that are expressions of human temperament. "The history of philosophy," James writes, "is to a great extent that of a certain clash of human temperaments." Yet philosophers conceal the temperamental origins of their fundamental beliefs, urging only "impersonal reasons" for their conclusions. Each considers those "of opposite temper to be out of key with the world's character, ... incompetent and "not in it," in the philosophic business, even tho they may far excel him in dialectical ability" (P, 11).

If in *Varieties,* James begins as a psychologist but soon operates as a philosopher, in *Pragmatism* he begins as a philosopher but soon operates as a psychologist. Looking at philosophers, he finds them believing things in advance, "wanting" a universe that suits their character, seeing those with other views as "incompetent," and so on. Pragmatism, James holds, does not seek to stifle these predispositions and the theories with which they are intertwined, but to "unstiffen" these theories, or "limber them up" (P, 32). James's pragmatist philosopher seeks a middle ground between dogmatism and skepticism, intellectualism and empiricism, religion and irreligion (P, 13).

In the opening 188 paragraphs of the *Investigations,* Wittgenstein identifies a set of philosophical temptations to which he sees himself

as having succumbed in the *Tractatus*. Temptations, for example, to "sublime" or "idealize" logic. These temptations are cognitive or intellectual but they are also psychological, taking the form of what we "feel" or "want." The philosophical "therapies" (PI, 133) Wittgenstein practices require identifying, even succumbing to, these temptations; and then countering them.[18]

> We feel as if we had to *penetrate* phenomena . . . (PI, 90).
> We are under the illusion that what is peculiar, profound, essential in our investigation, resides in its trying to grasp the incomparable essence of language (PI, 97).
> We want to say that there can't be any vagueness in logic. The idea now absorbs us, that the ideal '*must*' be found in reality (PI, 101).

Wittgenstein both immerses us in and stands apart from these tendencies, trying to draw us back from false ideals to the "rough ground" of ordinary language (PI, 107). The errors Wittgenstein diagnoses are not mistakes in reasoning, so much as they are defects of vision and response. They arise, Cavell suggests, from deep disappointments with our criteria, from a human desire to transcend the human.[19] In any case, Wittgenstein seeks a solution not just *of* the problems, but *for* the philosopher: "The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. – The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring itself in question" (PI, 133).

Wittgenstein's method, as many commentators have remarked, is not to refute but to "defuse," or render less potent, the preconceived pictures philosophers entertain about language and logic. One of his methods is simply to point to the diversity – to use James's word, the variety – of the phenomena. A problem "assumes the form" of the search for a hidden essence, when that search is the problem. The problem's solution takes the form of accepting language as it is. Problems in the *Investigations* are thus to be solved "not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known." Logic, which seemed to have a certain depth, is replaced by "grammar," which "does not tell us how language must be constructed, in order to fulfill its purpose, in order to have such-and-such effects. It only describes and in no way explains the use of signs" (PI, 496).[20]

Wittgenstein's philosophical therapies are conducted on and with his readers, including himself. "I should not like my writing," he wrote

in the Preface to the *Investigations*, "to spare other people the trouble of thinking" (PI, vi). Philosophy is for Wittgenstein a human activity in the sense that it involves working on one's own philosophical fixations, getting a clear view of them – and of the human forms of life from which they arise. Working in philosophy, he once wrote, "is really more a working on oneself. On one's own interpretation. On one's way of seeing things" (CV, 16).

In his discussions of the possibility of a private language, for example, Wittgenstein dramatizes various voices in a dispute – skeptical or dogmatic voices for example – and from time to time a mediating or correcting voice that is a supreme achievement of the *Investigations.*[21] There is a voice that asserts: " 'But when I imagine something, or even actually *see* objects, I have *got* something which my neighbor has not.' " And a voice of instruction that gently but pointedly asks: "But what is the thing you are speaking of?" (PI, 398). There is a voice that brings us back not only to ordinary language, but to ordinary experience:

> Look at the blue of the sky and say to yourself 'How blue the sky is!' – When you do it spontaneously – without philosophical intentions – the idea never crosses your mind that this impression of colour belongs only to you (PI, 275).

Wittgenstein here works against the "sense-data" tradition in philosophy that reaches back through his teachers Russell and Moore to Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. In such passages, Wittgenstein shows philosophy to be, as Cavell has put it, "in struggle with itself," a feature he thinks of as characteristic of "a tradition of perfectionist writing that extends in the West from Plato to Nietzsche, Ibsen, Kierkegaard, Wilde, Shaw, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein."[22] Perfectionist writing characteristically sets its readers the task of "allowing [themselves] to be changed by it," a task Cavell thinks Emerson and Wittgenstein, but not the pragmatists, require for the proper working of and with their texts. My question, as often when Cavell distances himself and his lineage from pragmatism, concerns the degree to which this is true of William James.[23] We certainly know of at least one reader who "allowed himself to be changed" by James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, a pragmatist text that did him "a lot of good." James's writing – in ways I have already indicated and to which I will return in Chapter 6 – invites self-reflection and a human response to its authorial presence. The "attraction of James the philosopher," Owen Flanagan writes,

"is that he is to me the best example I know of *a person doing philosophy*; there is no hiding the person behind the work, no way of discussing the work without the person, no way to make believe that there is a way to do philosophy that is not personal."[24] When Wittgenstein said that James was a good philosopher because he was a real human being, he was making a similar point, a point that also coheres with James's claim that the "personal" is our most trustworthy route to truth, more trustworthy even than the "impersonality of the scientific attitude" (VRE, 446). Perhaps it is because of these features of his philosophy that, in another context, Cavell lists James's *Varieties* among works "pertinent to the issue of perfectionism."[25]

3

I turn now from the Jamesian persona in *Varieties* to James the philosopher, at work in the first paragraph of its second chapter. As several commentators have noted, James anticipates Wittgenstein's notion of "family resemblances" (PI, 67).[26] Speaking about religion, but also about governments, James writes that they have no "essence, but many characters which may alternately be equally important." In the *Investigations,* Wittgenstein maintains that there is no common essence to the faces or characteristic expressions of a group of family members, nor to games, nor to numbers: that their features are like overlapping fibers in a thread, with no one fiber running through the whole (PI, 67). The depth and extent of the kinship between the thought and methods of *Varieties,* and those of the *Investigations,* can best be brought out by a close reading of the entire paragraph in which James's statement appears. For convenience in the commentary to follow, I have numbered each sentence:

> (1) Most books on the philosophy of religion try to begin with a precise definition of what its essence consists of. (2) Some of these would-be definitions may possibly come before us in later portions of this course, and I shall not be pedantic enough to enumerate any of them to you now. (3) Meanwhile the very fact that they are so many and so different from one another is enough to prove that the word 'religion' cannot stand for any single principle or essence, but is rather a collective name. (4) The theorizing mind tends always to the over-simplification of its materials. (5) This is the root of all that absolutism and one-sided dogmatism by which both philosophy and religion have been

infested. (6) Let us not fall immediately into a one-sided view of our subject, but let us rather admit freely at the outset that we may very likely find no one essence, but many characters which may alternately be equally important in religion. (7) If we should inquire for the essence of 'government,' for example, one man might tell us it was authority, another submission, another police, another an army, another an assembly, another a system of laws; yet all the while it would be true that no concrete government can exist without all these things, one of which is more important at one moment and others at another. (8) The man who knows governments most completely is he who troubles himself least about a definition which shall give their essence. (9) Enjoying an intimate acquaintance with all their particularities in turn, he would naturally regard an abstract conception in which these were unified as a thing more misleading than enlightening. (10) And why may not religion be a conception equally complex? (VRE, 32).

The first three sentences of this passage raise questions of essence and definition. Sentence 1 links essence with definition by speaking of "a precise definition of what [religion's] essence consists of," and sentence 3 concludes that because there are many (appropriate) definitions of religion there cannot be a "single principle or essence." Although James is by no means a "linguistic philosopher" like Russell or Wittgenstein (i.e., one for whom traditional problems of philosophy can be attacked through analyses of language), he here approaches the ontological question of essence from a linguistic point of view.

Sentence 1 is about beginnings – of a book or an enquiry or an intellectual edifice. James is willing to begin without a definition of religion, to make use of results gained without the clarity or tidiness a definition or some other absolute starting point might seem to afford. This attitude is pragmatic, for according to James's pragmatism the meaning of an idea is established by its results rather than by its origins or analysis. In the "Philosophy" chapter of *Varieties* James quotes his friend Charles Peirce's doctrine:

To develop a thought's meaning we need . . . only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce; that conduct is for us its sole significance; and the tangible fact at the root of all our thought-distinctions is that there is no one of them so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice (VRE, 399).

James is saying that the meaning of religion will come out in the variety of practices and experiences he is about to describe; and that one does

not need a definition first in order to know what these practices and experiences are.

Sentence 2 implies that definitions are not useless, for they "may possibly come before us" later. Whether they will do so as items to be refuted or criticized, or as devices for summarizing important aspects of his subject, James does not say in sentence 2, although sentence 3 suggests the latter. However, the disutility of definitions, particularly at the beginning of his enterprise, is suggested by James's remark in sentence 2 that it would be "pedantic" (i.e., "unduly emphasizing minutiae"[27]) "to enumerate any of them to you now." James is not *against* definition; it is not as if he wants to throw definitions out in favor of some inexplicable intuition (as did his friend Henri Bergson). Rather, he wants to place definitions in their appropriate place; for example, as summaries of patterns among the manifold material he presents, rather than as insights that capture the essence of religion in a brief formulation. Sentence 8 provides a reason for James's denigration of definitions by undercutting one reason definitions might be thought important: namely, that they help us know things. The knowledge in question, James is saying, lies in our "acquaintance" with the "particularities" of religion or government, and an overly abstract or general definition becomes "a thing more misleading than enlightening."

Sentence 2 also illustrates James's basic stance of openness to the phenomena, a stance characteristic of James's entire corpus, including *The Principles of Psychology*. As we shall see in Chapters 3 through 5, this stance is equally characteristic of Wittgenstein's later philosophy – with its repeated injunctions to "look and see" (PI, 66)[28] and its idea that our preconceptions prevent us from seeing what is right before our eyes (PI, 129).

In sentence 3, James stands back from the "many" "different" definitions to make the metalinguistic and metaphysical point that "the word 'religion' cannot stand for any single principle or essence, but is rather a collective name." This sentence expresses opposition to the idea of a "single . . . essence." It does not yet contain the idea of family resemblances because it doesn't discuss resemblances at all; only the idea of a "collection," not the principles of its organization. Among the points to note about this extraordinary sentence are these:

(i) James is clearly talking about language ("the word 'religion'"), and his formulation captures the "use-mention distinction" so important for analytic philosophy; (ii) a claim about language, namely that there are many definitions of religion, is said to entail a claim about that which the language refers to or connotes, that is, that religion has no "single principle or essence"; (iii) James leaves it open that religion has a multiple rather than a single essence, a set or collection of principles; (iv) James bases his conclusion on a survey of actual religious practices and experiences, actual uses of the term "religion" (what Wittgenstein might have called "description" as opposed to "explanation" [PI, 109]; (v) but no more than Wittgenstein is James offering merely a compilation of human practices or linguistic usages. His descriptions, like Wittgenstein's, "get their importance" from a philosophical project, in this case understanding the authority of a region of human experience.

If sentence 3 posits a linguistic level ("the word 'religion'") and an objective level (that for which the word *religion* "stand[s]"), and implicitly a position from which the relation of these two levels is discussed, then sentence 4 introduces yet another level of analysis where the motives and tendencies of the "theorizing mind" that observes these relationships come under discussion. Part of the background to James's claim that "the theorizing mind tends always to the over-simplification of its materials" are his warnings in *The Principles of Psychology* about the ways "in which a man will be blinded by *a priori* theories to the most flagrant facts" (PP, 692). Here we should note that although James complains about the "theorizing mind" in others, he also regards it as a tendency in himself. "Let us not fall immediately into a one-sided view of our subject," he writes in sentence 6, acknowledging ("us") the tendency to over-simplification warned of in sentence 4, yet at the same time encouraging us to work against it. His stance toward his own philosophical temptations is again parallel to the stance Wittgenstein displays when he enjoins us to look "into the workings of our language . . . *in despite of* an urge to misunderstand them" (PI, 109).

In sentence 5, James connects his project with the history of philosophy, seeing the battle against oversimplification as part of the struggle against traditional religious and philosophical "absolutism and one-sided dogmatism." Humble as James seems to be with his abandonment of traditional searches for clarity, definitions, and absolute

starting points, he is in fact – like critical philosophers from Kant to Wittgenstein – attacking dominant traditions of Western metaphysics.

James's sentence 6 is the most obvious anticipation in the paragraph of Wittgenstein's idea of family resemblances. The phrase "alternately be equally important" conveys the idea that the collection of characters shifts *its* character, as first one of the collection, then another one, assumes importance.[29] This is exactly the point Wittgenstein makes about family resemblances: as one looks at family members, first one character – the ears, say – assumes prominence, then another – say, a way of smiling or walking. What links all the members of the family is not one thing, but several or many things, some more important for some linkages, others important for different linkages. Wittgenstein shows this pattern of logical relationship not only among families, but among numbers and games:

> Look for example at board-games, with their multifarious relationships. Now pass to card-games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and others appear. When we pass next to ball-games, much that is common is retained, but much is lost (PI, 66).

In James's words, "many characters . . . may alternatively be equally important."

Sentence 7 brings out the temporality of the concepts James examines. Discussing government, which, like religion, has no one character present in all its instances, James writes that one character is "more important at one moment and others at another." This entails that concepts such as government or religion cannot reveal their (full) nature in just one moment. If they had a "single essence," it could perhaps be stated in a brief definition or revealed in a characteristic case. But, James insists, the concepts of religion or government do not take this form. Frege held that a definition "unambiguously determine[s], as regards any object, whether or not it falls under the concept. . . ."[30] Concepts thus understood will have determined all their instances in the moment of their definition. One may grasp their nature from a particular case. Whereas for religion or government, James is saying, the *varieties* of instances (and the various definitions that may seem useful in different cases) require a succession of "views." Like Wittgenstein, James is talking "about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm" (PI, 108).

Was Wittgenstein thinking of James's *Varieties* as he developed his later views of language? The answer to this question is not known. Certainly he does not mention James when he introduces his idea of family resemblances at section 67 of *Philosophical Investigations*, nor is *Varieties* mentioned anywhere in his published work, or in the *Nachlass*. When, late in his life, he worries that he is a pragmatist he never mentions any particular pragmatist. The only text of James to which Wittgenstein refers in the *Investigations* is *The Principles of Psychology*. Yet, we do know that Wittgenstein was a reader of *Varieties* in 1912, and that he recommended it to Drury in 1930. In the preceding discussion I have been thinking about the way this book might have been important for Wittgenstein's thinking both early and late, and about why Wittgenstein thought James was a good philosopher. I have concentrated on James's descriptions of the "sick soul" and mystical conversions; his emphasis on the personal and the human; and his attack on essences. And, I have touched on pragmatism, a subject that comes up from time to time in *Varieties*.

James once described two temperaments among philosophers: one rationalist, another (his own) pragmatist. "The rationalist mind," he writes,

> is of a doctrinaire and authoritative complexion: the phrase "*must* be" is ever on its lips. The belly-band of its universe must be tight. A radical pragmatist on the other hand is a happy-go-lucky anarchistic sort of creature. If he had to live in a tub like Diogenes he wouldn't mind at all if the hoops were loose and the staves let in the sun (P, 124).

The Wittgenstein who emerged on the philosophical scene in the teens and twenties is, like any flesh and blood philosopher, too complex to discuss exclusively in the categories James sets out. Of course, it can justly be said that there are more than two philosophical temperaments. Yet we can use James's categories here in the practical way he meant them to be employed, as a way to delineate certain features of Wittgenstein's thought.

It seems clear that if we had to apply one of the labels – "pragmatist" or "rationalist" – to Wittgenstein's early work and one to the later that the earlier work is rationalist and the later pragmatic. (Indeed, as we saw in Chapter 1, it is in and about his later work that Wittgenstein says it sounds like pragmatism.) Notice, then, the irony of the more

rationalist Wittgenstein reading and thinking about James's pragmatic book *Varieties of Religious Experience* at just the time when he was developing the doctrines that he would later fault for their rationalist ("crystalline") and dogmatic ("one-sided") character. As the preceding discussion suggests, however, he was at the same time assimilating methods and ideas from James's *Varieties* that would help form his later philosophy.

3

Wittgenstein and *The Principles of Psychology*: An Introduction

1

Wittgenstein recommended James's *Varieties* to Drury as a good work of philosophy in 1930, just about the time James's name begins to turn up in his notebooks.[1] Yet it is the James of *The Principles of Psychology* who appears there, not the James of *Varieties* or *Pragmatism.* The typescript published as *Philosophical Grammar,* for example (composed in 1932–4), mentions William James in a context that indicates the source clearly:

> A man who reads a sentence in a familiar language experiences the different parts of speech in quite different ways. . . . We quite forget that the written and spoken words "not," "table," and "green" are similar to each other. It is only in a foreign language that we see clearly the uniformity of words. (Compare William James on the feelings that correspond to words like "not," "but," and so on.)[2]

Wittgenstein's source is a passage from James's chapter on "The Stream of Thought" in *The Principles of Psychology*: "We ought to say a feeling of *and*, a feeling of *if*, a feeling of *but*, and a feeling of *by*, quite as readily as we say a feeling of *blue* or a feeling of *cold* (PP, 238). Although Wittgenstein had by this time already come to hold that "the use of a word in the language is its meaning,"[3] and would later criticize James for confusing experiences of meaning with the meaning itself, he does not do so here. Here, he *works with* James.

From the early thirties till the end of his life, *The Principles of Psychology* was an intellectual companion for Wittgenstein – not just, as with *Varieties,* a good book by a philosopher he respected, but a book Wittgenstein worked with, turned to, and continued both to tolerate and to criticize.[4] As Richard Gale puts it in his excellent commentary on James: "One gets the feeling that Wittgenstein wrote his *Philosophical Investigations* with an open copy of *The Principles of Psychology* before him, especially the chapter on "The Stream of Thought."[5] References to *The Principles,* whether explicit or implicit, permeate manuscripts and typescripts from which the *Investigations* is derived, and in the *Investigations* James is mentioned more often than anyone except Frege and St. Augustine. Three of the four citations of James occur in Part 1 of the *Investigations,* completed before the Second World War, while the single citation of James in Part 2 marks a *continuing* interest that – judging by the typescripts on which it is based – was perhaps at its most intense *after* the war. As Stephen Hilmy remarks, "such persistent refocussing on the views of a single author is very rare in Wittgenstein's writings."[6]

Wittgenstein left Cambridge for most of the war years, working first as a hospital orderly in London during the blitz of 1941–2, then in Newcastle on a medical research team. As he planned a return to teaching in 1944, he wrote Rush Rhees that he had considered using James's *Principles* as a text for his course. In the end, he wrote, "I didn't take James as my text but just talked out of my own head (or through my own hat)."[7] We learn about his interests in *The Principles* from the notes of a subsequent series of lectures, which show that Wittgenstein discussed James's theories of meaning and emotion, and his case of Mr. Ballard, a man deaf and dumb from birth. Wittgenstein's intense concern with James after the Second World War is also displayed in his typescripts of 1947–8, published in two volumes as *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology.* Volume 1 mentions seventeen people, of whom six are mentioned more than once: Beethoven and Lessing twice; Russell three times; Goethe five times; Köhler eight times; and James nine times. Volume 2 mentions just four people: Frege and Schubert once each; Köhler twice; and James four times.

Whereas *Varieties of Religious Experience* had been of interest to Wittgenstein for what it showed about human religious experience – overlapping what Wittgenstein thought of as ethics – *The Principles*

attracted Wittgenstein because of its discussions of language and the self, subjects that were central to the reconstruction of his philosophical views in the thirties and forties. This new relationship to a book by James is particularly complex, however, because it involves – as Wittgenstein's use of *Varieties* did not – considerable criticism. Yet James learned – and continued to learn – from *The Principles.* As I will try to show in this and the two succeeding chapters, the book's sheer variety of examples and its attempts to escape philosophical theory provided a counter to the "one-sided diet" (PI, 593) Wittgenstein complains about in much of philosophy. It not only offered Wittgenstein certain discoveries, such as "the absence of the will act," but a human intelligence motivated by philosophical issues (despite its claims to avoid philosophy), a voice of experienced, nonfanatical reasonableness. It had, in other words, the virtues of a book by William James, "a good philosopher because he was a real human being."

Some of the best commentators on the *Investigations* – for example, David Pears, David G. Stern, and Colin McGinn – ignore Wittgenstein's references to James entirely. Others who notice James's influence – for example, Robert Fogelin, Malcolm Budd, and Stephen Hilmy – see Wittgenstein not as having learned from James, but as predominantly critical of him.[8] Ian Hacking's view is typical: "James is the only psychologist (besides some of the Gestalt people) to whom Wittgenstein regularly alludes. The vigor of James's writing is used to make plain the bizarre paths into which we are led by the very idea of a faculty of introspective knowledge."[9] And Stephen Hilmy states: "There is perhaps no finer collection of psychologistic gems of 'scientific' *explanation* of language" than the chapter on association in James's *Principles of Psychology.*[10]

Certainly Wittgenstein finds that James commits important mistakes about language and the self. But why should Wittgenstein have continued to criticize James for the rest of his life? After all, there were plenty of mistakes in philosophy that Wittgenstein left aside, and any number of philosophers (Russell, Ogden, Ramsey) who once, but no longer, seemed interesting to Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein writes in *Zettel*:

> Some philosophers (or whatever you like to call them) suffer from what may be called 'loss of problems'. Then everything seems quite simple to them, no deep problems seem to exist any more, the world becomes broad and flat and

loses all depth, and what they write becomes immeasurably shallow and trivial. Russell and H. G. Wells suffer from this (Z, 456).[11]

This is unlike any remark Wittgenstein *ever* made about James, for all his exasperation with *The Principles of Psychology*. Wittgenstein's criticism of Russell's writing as "shallow and trivial" is a guide to virtues Wittgenstein continued to find in the *Principles*, a book he could *stand* to read again and again and to have on his shelf; a book where things are almost never "quite simple."

The tenor of Wittgenstein's new relation to James is captured in a passage from a notebook of the early 1930s that Hilmy cites to demonstrate that James's and Wittgenstein's positions are "wholly antithetical." In fact, the passage reveals an intricate pattern of divergence and overlapping thought. Wittgenstein writes:

How needed is the work of philosophy is shown by James's psychology. Psychology, he says, is a science, but he discusses almost no scientific questions. His movements are merely (so many) attempts to extricate himself from the cobwebs of metaphysics in which he is caught. He cannot yet walk, or fly at all he only wriggles. Not that that isn't interesting. Only it is not a scientific activity.[12]

Although Wittgenstein portrays James as in need of "the work of philosophy" – of what Wittgenstein would call philosophical therapy – this passage shows considerable appreciation and respect for James. Wittgenstein stresses the *nonscientific* "activity" that James undertakes, and he finds James's "wrigglings" in the course of this activity "interesting" – an evaluation that sets James off from almost all other philosophers.[13]

Wittgenstein's depiction of James as an interesting wriggler anticipates his depiction of his own aim (the task of philosophy) in the *Investigations*: to show "the fly the way out of the fly-bottle" (PI, 309). Wittgenstein saw James as *struggling* to "free himself from the cobwebs of metaphysics," not blindly but happily staying there. This struggle, of course, is something in which Wittgenstein enlists, and so James interests Wittgenstein not only for the errors he commits, but for his only partially comprehended attempts to overcome them. In any case, Wittgenstein sees the distance between James's official doctrine that he is a scientist – a psychologist – and his actual practice. James is

not, Wittgenstein insists, practicing science at all, and this is, from Wittgenstein's point of view, *a good thing*.[14] In contrast, Hilmy simply takes James to be a representative of the scientific world view to which Wittgenstein stood clearly opposed, as if that world view were shared equally by Russell, Carnap, Ogden, and James.[15]

2

Wittgenstein's exasperation with James is a response not so much to his practicing science, or claiming to be practicing science when he is doing something else, but, more fundamentally, to James's empiricism, his belief that *experience* is a sufficient fundamental category.

James studied psychology in Germany and France, and read continental philosophers and literary figures with enthusiasm; yet he always portrayed himself as favoring the philosophy of the English and Scots. Even late in his life, he saw himself as a follower of Mill and Hume. *Pragmatism* is dedicated "To the memory of John Stuart Mill from whom I first learned the pragmatic openness of mind and whom my fancy likes to picture as our leader were he alive to-day." And in a representative passage from *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909) he writes:

> In a subject like philosophy, it is really fatal to lose connexion with the open air of human nature, and to think in terms of shop-tradition only. In Germany the forms are so professionalized that anybody who has gained a teaching chair and written a book, however distorted and excentric, has the legal right to figure forever in the history of the subject like a fly in amber.[16]

German philosophers, James continues, show a "fear of popularity," and are preoccupied with technique. But "technique for technique, doesn't David Hume's technique set, after all, the kind of pattern most difficult to follow? Isn't it the most admirable? The english mind, thank heaven, and the french mind, are still kept, by their aversion to crude technique and barbarism, closer to truth's natural probabilities."[17]

There are similar passages in many of James's works and in his letters.[18] I mention them not to endorse these views of national character, but to agree with James that his work lies squarely in the British empirical tradition, even as it offers modifications of that tradition.[19] In contrast, Wittgenstein – like Leibniz and Frege – came

to philosophy through logic and mathematics. Most obviously in the *Tractatus* and *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics,* but also in *Philosophical Investigations,* Wittgenstein shows a concern for these subjects that is entirely foreign to empiricists such as Hume or Locke – or William James, for whom "logic-chopping" was an often-used term of abuse.[20] As Toulmin and Janik argue in *Wittgenstein's Vienna,*[21] Wittgenstein was an Austrian before he was a "Cambridge" or "Oxford" or "Anglo-American" philosopher, a thinker whose doctrine of the will, for example, had its origins in the work of Arthur Schopenhauer.[22] Stanley Cavell, P. M. S. Hacker, David Pears, Ernst Konrad Specht, Hilary Putnam, Hans Sluga, and Newton Garver all stress the Kantian themes and arguments in Wittgenstein's philosophy, both early and late.[23] Wittgenstein registers the clash of traditions that occurs as he reads James when he states: "James . . . thought of pain and depression as two experiences in the soul, whereas we say the concepts needn't even be comparable" (L, 40).

The view that James is unambiguously the representative of a scientific point of view has its basis in the following facts. James studied chemistry in the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard, rather than the course of liberal arts that Emerson, Thoreau, and Peirce followed at Harvard College.[24] As an undergraduate, he spent over a year in the Amazon collecting biological specimens with his teacher Louis Agassiz, and received his only advanced degree in medicine in 1869. He first taught Anatomy and Physiology at the Harvard Medical School – an assignment that leaves as its trace two substantial chapters on the brain in *The Principles of Psychology.* James studied physiology and experimental psychology in Germany and France, with, among others, Wilhelm Wundt and Jean Charcot; and he established one of America's first experimental psychology laboratories.[25] James used questionnaires to collect data on the consciousness of people who had lost limbs, and subjected his Harvard students to tests that required their being "whirled rapidly around with the head in different positions." He administered nitrous oxide to himself and reported the effects in a scientific journal.[26]

Yet James's interests and writings do not fit easily into any category, which is no doubt one of the reasons he was interesting to Wittgenstein. A talented painter as a teenager, he had intended to be an artist; and, as his student and biographer Ralph Barton Perry notes,

even as he studied at the Lawrence Scientific School he displayed his characteristically wide-ranging intellect:

> To conceive James during these years as engaged in the study of comparative anatomy, or medicine, is to form a very inadequate idea of his intellectual development. He was perpetually grazing and ruminating, wandering wherever the pasturage was good. Fortunately two notebooks of the year 1862–3 have been preserved, in which appear – along with items extracted from the lectures of Agassiz on "Geology and the Structure and Classification of the Animal Kingdom" and Joseph Lovering on "Electrostatics, Electrodynamics and Acoustics" – pencil drawings, historical and literary chronologies, sayings of Charles Peirce, an outline of the French Revolution, and abstracts of Büchner's *Kraft und Stoff,* Max Müller's *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature,* Farrar's *Origins of Language,* and Jonathan Edwards's *Original Sin.*[27]

In his early thirties, just when he was making his reputation as a psychologist, James decided that he wanted to be "called to a chair of philosophy." Because of the positions that were likely to be available to him, however, he resolved to "stick to biology for a profession."[28] His readings and writings remained as much literary (Goethe, Wordsworth) and philosophical (Peirce, Kant, Herbert Spencer, Charles Renouvier) as scientific; and his earliest publications were critiques of books on science, philosophy, and culture rather than reports of physiological research or the new psychophysics. In "The Sentiment of Rationality" (1879),[29] for example, James argues that reason is a passion. And in "Remarks on Spencer's Definition of Mind as Correspondence" (1878) – published in the year he contracted with Henry Holt to write *The Principles of Psychology* – James anticipates the voluntaristic pragmatism of his later works: "the knower is not simply a mirror floating with no foot-hold anywhere, and passively reflecting an order that he comes upon and finds simply existing. The knower is an actor, and co-efficient of the truth on one side, whilst on the other he registers the truth which he helps to create."[30] This statement, published twelve years before *The Principles,* indicates the kind of evidence that can be amassed for the claim that James was a pragmatist from the beginning till the end of his scholarly career.

James continued, however, to think of his philosophy as in some sense an empirical and even scientific enterprise: a blend of philosophy, psychology, and physiology in which, according to Perry, these disciplines "all interpenetrated."[31] James progressed at Harvard from an

appointment in medicine to an assistant professorship in psychology, then in 1895 to a professorship of philosophy – all the while retaining the sense that, as in *Varieties,* he was surveying some range of nature, including but not limited to human nature.

James's complicated approach is nowhere more evident than in "the masterpiece" to which Wittgenstein devoted so much attention: *The Principles of Psychology.*[32] This work of "scientific psychology" includes not only departures from, but criticisms of, science – even within a single chapter. For example, following a chapter on "Hypnotism" the book ends with a chapter on "Necessary Truths and the Effects of Experience," where James enters philosophical terrain with discussions of Mill, Locke, De Morgan, Hegel, and Sidgwick. He also assumes a critical stance toward science that both echoes "The Sentiment of Rationality" and presages the historicized outlook of *Pragmatism*: "The aspiration to be 'scientific'," he states, "an idol of the tribe to the present generation," is in fact an "altogether peculiar and one-sided subjective interest" invented only a few generations earlier and shared by "few even of the cultivated members of the race" (PP, 1236). This is the statement of a scientist who nevertheless thinks that our personal grapplings with the universe are often the deepest way in which we confront it.

The *Principles*'s chapter on "Will" considers not only the psychology of willing but the metaphysics of free will. Faced with the tension between scientific determinism and our belief in our own freedom or autonomy, James restricts the claims of science: "Science . . . must be constantly reminded that her purposes are not the only purposes, and that the order of uniform causation which she has use for, and is therefore right in postulating, may be enveloped in a wider order, on which she has no claims at all" (PP, 1179).[33] James thus takes a perspective *on,* and not just *within* science, and he shows once again an implicit pragmatism, in associating what we are "right in postulating" with what we have "use for."

Although James agreed to deliver *The Principles of Psychology* in a few years' time, it took him twelve years to write the book, and when he did send it off to Henry Holt, he wrote:

No one could be more disgusted than I at the sight of the book. *No* subject is worth being treated of in 1000 pages! Had I ten years more, I could rewrite it

in 500; but as it stands it is this or nothing – a loathsome, distended, tumefied, bloated, dropsical mass, testifying to nothing but two facts: *1st*, that there is no such thing as a *science* of psychology, and *2nd*, that W. J. is an incapable.[34]

Nevertheless, the book is a vast, readable album of fact, theory, and exquisite description, presided over by the inviting tour guide, William James. A representative passage that reveals James's fundamental empirical commitment occurs in the chapter entitled "The Perception of Reality":

A conception, to prevail, must *terminate* in the world of orderly sensible experience. . . . The history of science is strewn with wrecks and ruins of theory – essences and principles, fluids and forces – once fondly clung to, but found to hang together with no facts of sense. . . . What science means by 'verification' is no more than this, that no object of conception shall be believed which sooner or later has not some permanent and vivid object of sensation for its *term*.

This is one of the places in the book where James's debt to Hume is clearest, for his statement echoes a well-known passage in Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, where Hume states that our knowledge "terminate[s]" in sensation:

If I ask why you believe any particular matter of fact which you relate, you must tell me some reason; and this reason will be some other fact connected with it. But as you cannot proceed after this manner in infinitum, you must at last terminate in some fact which is present to your memory or senses or must allow that your belief is entirely without foundation.[35]

James writes not only as an empiricist in the tradition of Hume, but – something Hume was not – as a member of the scientific community. His specific scientific expertise is, of course, that of the psychologist, and the method he follows is introspection.[36] In an early chapter on "The Methods and Snares of Psychology," he writes:

Introspective Observation is what we have to rely on first and foremost and always. The word introspection need hardly be defined – it means, of course, the looking into our own minds and reporting what we there discover. . . . All people unhesitatingly believe that they feel themselves thinking, and that they distinguish the mental state as an inward activity or passion, from all the objects with which it may cognitively deal. *I regard this belief as the most fundamental of all the postulates of Psychology*, and shall discard all curious inquiries about its certainty as too metaphysical for the scope of this book (PP, 185).

In this passage we encounter the James that Hilmy finds, who draws a sharp line between his role as a psychologist and the projects of metaphysicians. But rather than hewing to this line (or lines) separating his project from traditional philosophical questions, James finds himself drawn back and forth across it.[37]

Although James was familiar with emerging German and French experimental work in psychology, and ran his own laboratory at Harvard from 1875 onward, no more than a fifth of *The Principles of Psychology* can, in Perry's estimate, "be said to relate even to the experimental work of others."[38] The important idea of "the stream of thought," for example, comes from no laboratory experiment, and many of the book's most striking and important passages record James's acute awareness of his own normal experience, or his sensitivity to our wider appreciations of life.

Several of these texts are of a piece with passages in *Varieties* that Wittgenstein would have found of importance in thinking about "ethics." For example, in "The Stream of Thought" (probably the single most important chapter for Wittgenstein's later philosophy) there are descriptions that might have furnished material for the *Tractatus*'s distinction between the world of the happy and of the unhappy man. We feel the world differently when we are young than when we are older, James states, or "when we are in different organic moods. What was bright and exciting becomes weary, flat, and unprofitable. The bird's song is tedious, the breeze is mournful, the sky is sad" (PP, 226). Other passages bring to mind the alienated world of the sick soul in which "nothing touches us intimately, rouses us, or wakens natural feeling." (PP, 926–7).[39] A passage from the "Will" chapter reveals James's "existentialist"[40] character:

> "*Will you or won't you have it so*?" is the most probing question we are ever asked; we are asked it every hour of the day, and about the largest as well as the smallest, the most theoretical as well as the most practical, things. We answer by *consents or non-consents* and not by words. What wonder that these dumb responses should seem our deepest organs of communication with the nature of things! (PP, 1182).

These passages are roots of the broad voluntaristic epistemology that James developed in such later works as *The Will to Believe, Varieties of Religious Experience, Pragmatism,* and *A Pluralistic Universe.*

According to James, a precondition for certain kinds of knowing or "communication with the nature of things" is an act or attitude of the knowing subject.[41] In the passage just cited, James records his own view and his own "attitude": these "dumb responses" "seem" our deepest organs of communication. To whom? one may ask. Not to a group of subjects in James's psychophysics laboratory at Harvard, but to James, someone Wittgenstein considered "a good philosopher because he was a real human being." "Yes," Wittgenstein might have thought as he read *The Principles of Psychology* in the early thirties, "this is the same William James I first met in *Varieties of Religious Experience*; and if this is introspection, it is a method I too have employed." Yet, Wittgenstein found James's employment of the introspective method in *The Principles of Psychology* a source of deep mistakes about the mind, and it was not for the preceding passages, presaging the concerns of *Varieties*, that Wittgenstein was reading James's first book.

3

James thinks of himself as analyzing, classifying, or just describing *phenomena*, ultimately experiences; whereas Wittgenstein, the author of an earlier "logico-philosophical" work, an inheritor of the Kantian tradition, considers *concepts*. Wittgenstein succinctly expresses this fundamental opposition in the opening sentence in section 383 of *Investigations*: "We are not analyzing a phenomenon (e.g. thought) but a concept (e.g. that of thinking), and therefore the use of a word." James is one of Wittgenstein's targets on just this point, as we have seen in discussing Wittgenstein's postwar lectures: "James . . . thought of pain and depression as two experiences in the soul, whereas we say the concepts needn't even be comparable" (L, 40). Wittgenstein warns that the concept of experience, like that of fact or happening or even his own "description," only seems to furnish a kind of "bedrock, deeper than any special methods and language-games." But, he continues, such "extremely general terms have an extremely blurred meaning. They relate in practice to innumerable special cases, but that does not make them any *solider*, no, rather it makes them more fluid" (RPP, 648). Although James tried to eschew metaphysics, it crept in anyway. "The essential thing about metaphysics," Wittgenstein wrote,

is that "the difference between factual and conceptual investigations is not clear to it" (RPP, 949).

In Wittgenstein's later philosophy, the search for conceptual structures that he had conducted in the *Tractatus* continues, but, as Hacker puts it, these structures "are now conceived *sub specie humanitatus.*"[42] What then are "conceptual investigations," and what are "conceptual structures," or just "concepts" for the later Wittgenstein? It is easier to say what they are not – for example, experiences, objects – than to say what they are. In Wittgenstein's later philosophy, concepts are no longer taken to be eternal objects, as they were in the *Tractatus.* They are in some sense bound up with phenomena – emerging from our forms of life, at home in language games. In this respect Wittgenstein's later philosophy contains a deep empirical, even historical strain. "What we are supplying," he writes, "are really remarks on the natural history of human beings; . . . observations which no one has doubted, but which have escaped remark only because they are always before our eyes" (PI, 415). Early in the *Investigations,* Wittgenstein speaks of a variety of uses of language – "commanding, questioning, recounting, chatting" – that are "as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing" (PI, 25). Human beings chat and command as naturally as horses walk or birds make nests. These activities are part of our "form of life" (PI, 19). Yet although the later Wittgenstein moves in James's empiricist direction in recognizing the contingency and variety of our language, he preserves – as James does not – the fundamental distinction between concepts and experiences.

Wittgenstein's naturalism in the *Investigations* extends beyond his discussions of the biological roots of our concepts to the immense underlying role played by the laws of nature. What would the concept of "weighing" be, he asks, if the mass of objects increased or decreased in unpredictable ways? The concept depends on, as it helps define, such laws. Wittgenstein's interest, however, is not that of a scientist trying to explain "the formation of concepts . . . by facts of nature," but that of the philosopher making a point about the contingency of our concepts:

> . . . if anyone believes that certain concepts are absolutely the correct ones, and that having different ones would mean not realizing something that we realize – then let him imagine certain very general facts of nature to be different

from what we are used to, and the formation of concepts different from the usual ones will become intelligible to him (PI, p. 230).

As the phrase "natural history" indicates, Wittgenstein's discussion of language is historical rather than personal. "Our language," he writes,

> can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses" (PI, 18).

Concepts develop as human instruments or tools, within human culture. The rules for our language arise with – not before – our language. Although they require people in order to arise, however, rules are not *experiences* of people. In the same way, systems of laws or games such as baseball arise only through the lives of human beings; but laws or the rules of baseball are not experiences of human beings.

Whereas for Hume, James's empiricist hero, an "idea" is just a less lively and vivacious impression, a weaker experience, for Wittgenstein – as for Kant or Schopenhauer – concepts are "rules," expressing "logic," and licensing "necessary" connections.[43] If in James's universe everything is or terminates in experience, in Wittgenstein's universe, our life is bound up with, inseparable from, concepts, meanings, rules or, in one of Wittgenstein's preferred words, "grammar."

Wittgenstein asks: "Is what we call 'obeying a rule' something that it would be possible for only one man to do, and to do only once in his life? – This is of course a note on the grammar of the expression 'to obey a rule'." If obeying a rule were like having an experience it would be possible for it to happen just once, to one person. Wittgenstein continues with an answer to his question:

> It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which someone obeyed a rule. It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which a report was made, an order given or understood, and so on. – To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are *customs* (uses, institutions) (PI, 201).

Wittgenstein illustrates the difference between phenomena and rules by considering the game of chess. If "mate" were a phenomenon, something we could experience, then we could "try and make out what

the word 'mate' meant by close observation of the last move of some game of chess" (PI, 316). But of course, although one can see the board and the movement of the pieces, one cannot see the rules of chess that give these pieces meaning, and make this arrangement a checkmate. The rules are not ghostly or hidden: as Wittgenstein states in another context, they are not things, but they are not "nothings" either (PI, 304). Checkmating is not a mysterious, hidden, or subtle action or object, but a "social fact" that emerges in the course of our "natural history" (human beings didn't always play chess).[44] A move in chess, he states, is not simply the movement of an object on a board, nor is it a set of internal thoughts as one makes such a move; rather, it is constituted by "the circumstances that we call 'playing a game of chess,' 'solving a chess problem,' and so on" (PI, 33). Whatever their nature and their role in determining meaning, these "circumstances" are not experiences.[45]

Wittgenstein elucidates his ideas about concepts, logic, and grammar by considering what it is to follow a rule. He rejects a strong form of platonism, which takes the rules for our use of language – including our mathematical languages – to be inscribed in some metaphysical domain, entirely independent of human beings. His platonic interlocutor uses the images of "rails," tracks, or a rigid machine. Wittgenstein also tries to steer clear of radical conventionalism, according to which our rules are arbitrary, and how one follows a rule is a matter of one's interpretation of it. Wittgenstein *seems* to endorse a conventionalist interpretation when he writes "No course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule" (PI, 201). Saul Kripke makes the skepticism embodied in this thesis the basis of his interpretation of Wittgenstein as having offered a "skeptical solution" to the problem of what following a rule is. However, such skeptical conventionalism is in fact a position Wittgenstein rejects at section 201 of *Philosophical Investigations*, where after writing that "every course of action can be made out to accord with a rule," he goes on to say:

It can be seen that there is a misunderstanding here from the mere fact that in the course of our argument we give one interpretation after another; as if each one contented us at least for a moment, until we thought of yet another standing behind it. What this shows is that there is a way of grasping a rule

which is *not* an *interpretation*, but which is exhibited in what we call 'obeying the rule' and 'going against it' in actual cases (PI, 201).

What is this way of grasping a rule? In his influential paper "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule," John McDowell writes: "I think the thesis that obeying a rule is a practice is meant to constitute the answer to this question."[46] Like Cavell, McDowell writes of our being "initiated" into a form of life, from within which there is no "justification" for our basic rules. But this is not to say the rules are arbitrary, or that we are not right to use them. McDowell calls attention to two of Wittgenstein's remarks:

"To use an expression without a justification does not mean to use it without right" (PI, 289).[47]
"The difficult thing here is not, to dig down to the ground; no, it is to recognize the ground that lies before us as the ground."[48]

Our practice is the ground, and it is wrong to think that an interpretation is always needed to support that practice. What supports it – but not in a deductive or logical sense – are the agreements in natural reactions spoken of in the preceding text.[49]

How can one describe the form of life of a human-language user? Consider two features emphasized by Cavell and another by McDowell. In the human form of life, which includes human language, each speaker has the authority to speak as a member of the community, to say how an ordinary language expression is used. When we initiate someone into language, Cavell writes, "we must make ourselves exemplary and take responsibility for that assumption of authority; and the initiate must be able to follow us, in however rudimentary a way, *naturally* (look where our finger points, laugh at what we laugh at, comfort what we comfort, notice what we notice...."[50] Cavell points, on the one hand, to our agreements in reactions (e.g., looking where the finger points rather than – as my cat does – just following the finger). And on the other hand, he stresses our first-person authority, which is not a prediction, nor the report of an agreement, nor an interpretation, but a claim expressed in a " 'universal voice' "[51] about which any speaker of the language is as good an authority as any other. Native speakers do not require evidence for their knowledge of the rules of their language, for they are, as Stephen Mulhall puts it, "the sources of that evidence."[52] This does not mean they are infallible, for any speaker

can be wrong about the language he or she speaks. The philosopher of ordinary language, writes Cavell, "turns to the reader not to convince him without proof but to get him to prove something, test something, against himself. He is saying: Look and find out whether you can see what I see, wish to say what I wish to say."[53]

Another feature of membership in the human form of life is that members of the community experience others' words, gestures, and bodies as meaningful – not just as noises or objects we have to *interpret* to find meaningful. The "shared command of a language," McDowell writes, "equips us to know one another's meaning without needing to arrive at that knowledge by interpretation, because it equips us to hear someone else's meaning in his words."[54] We will return to this topic in Chapter 5.

When he thinks about linguistic meaning – which is not nearly as often as Wittgenstein – James sees experiences as the only candidates. In the passage considered by Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Grammar* – we "ought to say a feeling of *and,* a feeling of *if,* a feeling of *but,* and a feeling of *by,* quite as readily as we say a feeling of *blue* or a feeling of *cold*" (PP, 238) – James does not actually say, although he suggests, that the *feeling* of "and" is the *meaning of the word* "and." In any case, this is the way Wittgenstein does take it, if not in *Philosophical Grammar,* then in *The Brown Book* of 1934–5, and Part 2 of the *Investigations.*

James is the second person (after Augustine) named in *The Brown Book,* the notes that Wittgenstein dictated to Alice Ambrose and Francis Skinner in 1934–5:

> William James speaks of specific feelings accompanying the use of such words as "and", "if", "or". And there is no doubt that at least certain gestures are often connected with such words, as a collecting gesture with "and", and a dismissing gesture with "not". And there obviously are visual and muscular sensations connected with these gestures. On the other hand it is clear enough that these sensations do not accompany every use of the word "not" and "and". . . . Ask yourself: "When I said, 'Give me an apple *and* a pear, *and* leave the room', had I the same feeling when I pronounced the two words 'and'? (BB, 78–9).[55]

Wittgenstein examines a variety of cases, but fails to find the feeling that James supposed must always be there. The fact that "certain gestures are often connected with such words" remained a subject of interest to him till the end of his life, but his thrust here is basically critical, for

he wants to distinguish "the meaning of signs" considered as "states of mind" from meanings considered as "the role these signs are playing in a system of language" (BB, 78). The word "system" here exemplifies Wittgenstein's "logical," "Kantian," or "idealist" side. Unlike James's idealist opponents, however (Royce, Bradley), Wittgenstein's "idealism" is not "absolute," for the rules of our language, like the streets of our cities, have a history.[56]

Wittgenstein also attributes to James the idea that meanings are states of mind in his unpublished "Big Typescript," where he draws the contrast between states of mind and meanings construed in terms of "rules":

> What are we to understand by the "meaning" of a word? A characteristic feeling that accompanies the asserting (hearing) of the word? (The and-feeling, if-feeling of James.) Or are we to use the word "meaning" completely differently; and, for example, say two words have the same meaning when the same grammatical rules apply to both of them? We can take it as we want, but must recognize that these are two completely different forms of use (meanings) of the word "meaning." (One could also speak of a specific feeling which the chess player experiences while moving the king.)[57]

These different "forms of use (meanings) of the word 'meaning'" furnish the basis for Wittgenstein's criticisms in Part 2, section vi of the *Investigations* (although the reference to James drops out):

> Are you sure there is a single if-feeling, and not perhaps several? Have you tried saying the word in a great variety of contexts? For example, when it bears the principal stress of the sentence, and when the word next to it does?
>
> Does a person never have the if-feeling when he is not uttering the word "if"? Surely it is at least remarkable if this cause alone produces this feeling.

The audience for Wittgenstein's question, "Are you sure there is a single if-feeling" is, firstly, William James; and secondly, all who agree with him that a feeling does or could constitute the meaning of a term. The outcome of Wittgenstein's experiments will be the negative teaching that "[t]he meaning of a word is not the experience one has in hearing or saying it, and the sense of a sentence is not a complex of such experiences" (PI, p. 181).

Wittgenstein applies the distinction between phenomena such as feelings and concepts or meanings not only to language, but to the mind – for example, to such mental states or processes as intending and

understanding. Corresponding to the claim that one cannot discover what checkmating is by examining a chess player's behavior during the moment of mating is the claim that one can't discover what an intention is by observing one's consciousness while intending:

> An intention is embedded in its situation, in human customs and institutions. If the technique of the game of chess did not exist, I could not intend to play a game of chess. In so far as I do intend the construction of a sentence in advance, that is made possible by the fact that I can speak the language in question (PI, 337).

In contrast, James treats intention as a subjective psychological event, missing entirely the role of "techniques," "institutions," "customs," and "situations" in our use of language and in our thinking. He states that

> even before we have opened our mouths to speak, the entire thought is present to our mind in the form of an intention to utter that sentence. This intention, though it has no simple name, and though it is a transitive state immediately displaced by the first word, is yet a perfectly determinate phase of thought, unlike anything else (PP, 269–70).

Wittgenstein would seem to have this passage in mind when he writes in one of his notebooks: "James's assertion that the thought is complete at the start of the sentence . . . treats intention as an experience."[58]

Wittgenstein attacks this position in the *Investigations,* though without mentioning that it is James's view: "But didn't I already intend the whole construction of the sentence (for example) at its beginning? So surely it already existed in my mind before I said it out loud!" When he returns to the view in a 1946 manuscript, he does identify James as the view's proponent: "Compare James's idea that the thought is already complete at the start of the sentence with the lightning-like speed of thought and the concept of intending to say this and that."[59] In the *Investigations,* a voice of instruction replies to James's idea, saying that "here we are constructing a misleading picture of 'intending', that is, of the use of this word." The picture can be corrected, the voice goes on, if we see that the ability to intend a sentence in advance presupposes our ability to speak a language:

> After all, one can only say something if one has learned to talk. Therefore in order to *want* to say something one must also have mastered a language; and

yet it is clear that one can want to speak without speaking. Just as one can want to dance without dancing. And when we think about this, we grasp at the *image* of dancing, speaking, etc. (PI, 337).

Wittgenstein conducts his characteristic "therapy" here, diagnosing a moment in thought when we go off the rails and "grasp at the *image* of dancing, speaking, etc." We grasp for something resembling an experience, something to label "the intention." What we are looking for, however – what will solve the problem or relieve the discomfort – is not a phenomenon but a better view of the forms of human life.

4

I have been tracing Wittgenstein's critical discussion of James's "if-feeling" from his manuscripts of the early 1930s to Part 2 of the *Investigations*, composed in the late 1940s. I want now to consider James in a more positive light, as someone who offered Wittgenstein examples not only of what to avoid in philosophy but of how to proceed. My case in point is James's long, rich, and complicated chapter entitled simply "Will" (PP, 1098–1191). Here James records his discovery of what Wittgenstein came to call "the absence of an act of volition" (BB, 151).

James's chapter focuses on the theory of his contemporary Wilhelm Wundt that there is one special feeling – a "feeling of innervation" – present in all intentional action. According to Wundt, an outflow of energy from the brain is responsible for any intentional action and therefore – the step James wishes to challenge – there must be a feeling of that outflow, or else "the mind could never tell which particular current, the current to this muscle or the current to that one was the right one to use" (PP, 1104). Wundt calls this the "feeling of innervation," and James denies its existence.

There are, of course, cases of muscular action for which the theory seems most plausible:

One has only to play ten-pins or billiards, or throw a ball, to catch his will in the act, as it were, of balancing tentatively its possible efforts, and ideally rehearsing various muscular contractions nearly correct, until it gets just the right one before it, when it says 'Now go!' This premonitory weighing feels so much like a succession of tentative sallyings forth of power into the outer

world, followed by correction just in time to avoid the irrevocable deed, that the notion that *outgoing* nerve-currents rather than mere vestiges of former passive sensibility accompany it, is a most natural one to entertain (PP, 1105).

But if there are cases where it is "natural" to suppose that there is a special feeling in every willful act, James also brilliantly details a range of cases in which it does *not* seem natural to suppose there is such a feeling. For example:

Whilst talking I become conscious of a pin on the floor, or of some dust on my sleeve. Without interrupting the conversation I brush away the dust or pick up the pin. I make no express resolve, but the mere perception of the object and the fleeting notion of the act seem of themselves to bring the latter about. Similarly, I sit at table after dinner and find myself from time to time taking nuts or raisins out of the dish and eating them. My dinner properly is over, and in the heat of the conversation I am hardly aware of what I do; but the perception of the fruit, and the fleeting notion that I may eat it, seem fatally to bring the act about. There is certainly no express fiat here; any more than there is in all those habitual goings and comings and rearrangements of ourselves which fill every hour of the day, and which incoming sensations instigate so immediately that it is often difficult to decide whether not to call them reflex rather than voluntary acts" (PP, 1131).

Now consider a passage from *The Brown Book,* where Wittgenstein is discussing the will:

Think, say, of these examples: I deliberate whether to lift a certain heavyish weight, decide to do it, I then apply my force to it and lift it. Here, you might say, you have a full-fledged case of willing and intentional action. Compare with this such a case as reaching a man a lighted match after having lit with it one's own cigarette and seeing that he wishes to light his; or again the case of moving your hand while writing a letter, or moving your mouth, larynx, etc while speaking – Now when I called the first example a full-fledged case of willing, I deliberately used this misleading expression. For this expression indicates that one is inclined in thinking about volition to regard this sort of example as one exhibiting most clearly the typical characteristic of willing. One takes one's ideas, and one's language, about volition from this kind of example and thinks that they must apply – if not in such an obvious way – to all cases which one can properly call cases of willing . . . (BB, 150).

Like James, Wittgenstein discusses a "standard," "paradigm," or allegedly "full-fledged case of willing," pointing out that it is just one case among a variety of intentional actions. This passage exhibits a key

element of Wittgenstein's later philosophical method: his "deliberate" use of a "misleading expression." He is trying to uncover the roots or motives or sources of these misleading expressions (here the expression "full-fledged case of willing"). Why, Wittgenstein is asking, does this seem like a full-fledged case and the others pale imitations?

James and Wittgenstein not only stress the variety of cases of willing, but offer deflationary accounts with regard to acts of will. There is less in our psychic life than there might seem to be, or than might seem necessary. James calls this following the "principle of parsimony in consciousness" (PP, 1108). "Moving your mouth while speaking" – Wittgenstein's case – no more requires a resolving act of will than "taking nuts out of the dish" – James's case. James does not embrace a position that is the target of Wittgenstein's attack, but rather a set of examples that can be used to reinforce it: one brushes away the dust or picks up the pin intentionally, but with no "express resolve." Here Wittgenstein learns from and works *with*, not against, William James.

A second vivid passage from James's "Will" chapter – just a page after that previously quoted – contains a central example that Wittgenstein uses in his discussion of willing in *The Brown Book*:

> We know what it is to get out of bed on a freezing morning in a room without a fire, and how the very vital principle within us protests against the ordeal. Probably most persons have lain on certain mornings for an hour at a time unable to brace themselves to the resolve. We think how late we shall be, how the duties of the day will suffer; we say, "I *must* get up, this is ignominious," etc., but still the warm couch feels too delicious, the cold outside too cruel, and resolution faints away and postpones itself again and again just as it seemed on the verge of bursting the resistance and passing over into the decisive act. Now how do we *ever* get up under such circumstances? If I may generalize from my own experience, we more often than not get up without any struggle or decision at all. We suddenly find that we *have* got up (PP, 1132).

"This case," James adds on the next page, "seems to me to contain in miniature form the data for an entire psychology of volition" (PP, 1133).

Back now to *The Brown Book*, where Wittgenstein has been making the point that in some cases of intentional action, which we misleadingly think of as paradigms, there is an "'act of volition' . . . different from the action which is willed," but that in his examples and "innumerable" other cases there is no such act. He continues:

Now on the other hand it has been said that when a man, say, gets out of bed in the morning, all that happens may be this: he deliberates, "Is it time to get up?", he tries to make up his mind, and then suddenly *he finds himself getting up*. Describing it this way emphasizes the absence of an act of volition (BB, 151).

"It has been said" – by James, as we have just seen. We can confirm that James is Wittgenstein's source by considering a passage from a slightly later unpublished work of Wittgenstein's, *Eine Philosophische Betrachtung*, finished in 1936, where Wittgenstein writes:

This absence of the will act, as I shall now call it, was noticed by William James, and he describes the act of getting up in the morning, for example, as follows: he is lying in bed and reflecting whether it is time to get up – and all of a sudden *he finds himself getting up*.[60]

Wittgenstein was thus thinking *along with* James as well as against him in the mid-thirties. The topics of interest are no longer the religious or ethical ideas found in *Varieties*, but, in accord with the subject of *The Principles*, more general psychological matters. Although the discussion of "the absence of the will act" is just one point of impact, James's statement that "this case seems to me to contain in miniature form the data for an entire psychology of volition" points to the considerable reach of this claim, a reach that Wittgenstein saw and explored.

Wittgenstein wants to bring "the absence of the will act . . . noticed by William James," to our attention, but his discussion in *The Brown Book* proceeds, as the *Investigations* was to do more dramatically and forcefully, through a series of claims and counterclaims about this absence. He states, for example, that "there is something in the above description [of getting out of bed] which tempts us to contradict it; we say: 'We don't just "find", observe, ourselves getting up, as though we were observing someone else! It isn't like, say, watching certain reflex actions.'" He then gives the example of pressing one's arm and hand back against a wall for a few minutes, then releasing the arm and watching it rise. This "is the sort of case," he suggests, "in which it would be proper to say, 'I *find* my arm rising'." Getting out of bed is certainly not like that.

Wittgenstein thus dramatizes a temptation to contradict James. But is it a temptation to which he thinks we should yield? His defense of James exhibits one of the strategies of his later philosophy (and also a strategy of James's philosophy): the surveying of a range of cases. He

agrees that there is a difference between voluntarily getting out of bed and the involuntary rising of my arm. But, he adds, "there is not just one difference between so-called voluntary acts and involuntary ones, viz., the presence or absence of one element, the 'act of volition.'" Perhaps "finding myself doing x" applies properly to both voluntary and involuntary acts.

The temptation to contradict James stems from embracing one of several extreme or fanatical positions, each of which emphasizes only one case. One position says that an act of volition – of the sort involved in heavy muscular effort (e.g., moving a crate) – is required for any intentional act. The other says that to "find that we *have* got up" is appropriate only for a case such as the arm rising, in which we "observe" our body moving. Wittgenstein dissolves the objection by showing that the lines of our concepts (what he would later call their physiognomy) are more varied than the objector imagines.

In the early pages of *The Brown Book*, Wittgenstein speaks of "our craving for generality," and our "tendency to look for something in common to all the entities which we commonly subsume under a general term" (BB, 17). One could also describe this craving as a "contemptuous attitude towards the particular case." The craving has its source, Wittgenstein maintains, in "our preoccupation with the method of science," something that "leads the philosopher into complete darkness" (BB, 18). Wittgenstein works against this attitude and this craving, which has "shackled philosophical investigation [and] made the philosopher dismiss as irrelevant, the concrete cases [a Jamesean expression if there ever was one!], which alone could have helped him to understand the usage of the general term" (BB, 19–20).

In the example we have examined, Wittgenstein found James's *Principles of Psychology* helpful precisely in its discussion of a range of cases. When Wittgenstein says in the *Investigations* that a main source of "philosophical disease" is a "one-sided diet," that "one nourishes one's thinking with only one sort of example" (PI, 593), he is agreeing with an argument or method to be found in James's *Principles.* Whereas in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein had been working basically a priori, arguing for the one analysis of language that would make ordinary language possible, in his later philosophy he seeks a "surview" (as Hacker usefully translates the term "ubersehen") – a survey and wide view – of the range of linguistic phenomena that actually exist.[61]

James's position as set out in his "Will" chapter, then, is a source for Wittgenstein's *Brown Book* in four respects: (a) James disbelieves in the existence of a particular feeling of will for every act, (b) he points to cases (practicing throwing a ball) where it is "natural" to suppose that there is such a feeling, (c) he points to other cases (getting out of bed) where no such feeling occurs, and (d) he diagnoses the cause of the erroneous belief in (a) as a fixation on the cases in (b).

The example of getting out of bed in the morning does not finally make its way into the *Investigations*, but the point Wittgenstein and James use it to make does. That point is part of a discussion – roughly sections 610–28 – in which James is mentioned, but only for having held the questionable view that "our vocabulary is inadequate" to describe certain phenomena (PI, 610).

Section 622 of *Investigations* consists of one sentence: "When I raise my arm I do not usually try to raise it." As James had noticed, when I reach for the nuts, I do not usually try to reach for them: I just do it, or "find myself doing it." Wittgenstein uses the word "usually." He is not denying that there are cases in which one manages to raise one's arm after trying to raise it. What he denies is that this is the normal case, and especially that it is necessarily the case.

The paragraph just before section 622 contains a reference to James, but it requires some analysis to bring it out. Wittgenstein writes:

> Let us not forget this: when "I raise my arm," my arm goes up. And the problem arises: what is left over if I subtract the fact that my arm goes up from the fact that I raise my arm?
> ((Are the kinaesthetic sensations my willing?)) (PI, 621).

The first two sentences express a temptation, or the genesis of a temptation, to search for an act of will that precedes the action of raising my arm – a temptation we have seen James wishing to counter. The parenthetical remark, however, refers to a particular argument in the "Will" chapter of James's *Principles* that Wittgenstein sees as succumbing to just such a temptation. "Kinaesthetic" is a term used by James side by side with his attack on the innervation theory. In James's view, although there is no feeling of outgoing energy in intentional action, there must be something about us when we are about to do something – something that identifies what it is we are about to do. He calls this a "kinaesthetic idea" (PP, 1106) or, sometimes, a

"kinaesthetic image" (PP, 1107), a concept he introduces on the very page on which he launches his attack on the innervation theory: "*whether or no there be anything else in the mind at the moment when we consciously will a certain act, a mental conception made up of memory-images of these sensations, defining which special act it is, must be there.*" That is, if we are doing x, there "must" be something – "memory images of sensations" – that constitutes our consciousness of what we are doing. James does not think he is introducing any suspicious entity or occurrence; his main point is that there is *not* the feeling of innervation posited by "a powerful tradition in Psychology." Accordingly, he follows the previously quoted definition with the following: "Now *is there anything else in the mind when we will to do an act?* . . . My first thesis accordingly is, that *there need be nothing else*, and that *in perfectly simple voluntary acts there is nothing else, in the mind but the kinaesthetic idea, thus defined, of what the act is to be*" (PP, 1104). Whereas James speaks of "kinaesthetic ideas" and says these ideas are images of sensations, Wittgenstein uses the expression "kinaesthetic sensations." Following James's main line in the "Will" chapter, but not his practice in the passages just cited, Wittgenstein questions whether any such images need occur, and whether even if they did occur they could constitute my willing.

Reading *The Principles of Psychology* must have been a little frustrating for Wittgenstein. Here was a philosopher he admired and learned from, falling victim to problems he had diagnosed in others: positing something he did not experience but thought "had to be there." "The first step," Wittgenstein writes in the *Investigations,* "is the one that altogether escapes notice. We talk of processes and states and leave their nature undecided" (PI, 308). Willing, as Wittgenstein sees it, is not a phenomenon, although from time to time there are experiences of willing strongly or of effort. Voluntary actions include: trying and failing (to find one's keys); trying and succeeding (to learn passable French); doing something while hardly thinking of it at all (rubbing one's beard); and doing something with intense concentration, with a sense of responsibility, or of danger. But there is no general or single experience of willing or "act of volition." James understood this, but still had this ancient term, "will," and the sense that there ought to be something positive to say about it. With his general empiricism and his incipient radical empiricism, there is nothing in James's universe *other than experience* for the will – or anything else – to be. So he continued

to look for something – a kinaesthetic idea perhaps, or an act of attention – to be the *experience* marked out by the term "will." Never a proponent of any science, especially of psychology, Wittgenstein proposes to reorient the discussion from phenomena or experience to concepts, and therefore, to uses of language. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein finds in James an ally for the broadly applicable, basic point that for a whole range of ordinary intentional actions – munching on nuts and raisins, getting out of bed, lighting a match – there are no specific acts of will. James, like Wittgenstein, is in the business of resisting the seeming necessities of bad theories.

5

There is in fact a parallel movement of thought, or of method, pervading James's *Principles* and Wittgenstein's *Investigations*: a movement from the *explanatory* to the *descriptive.* This is the strain in James that writers such as Wilshire and Edie identify as proto-phenomenological, for it is an attempt to describe human experience "naively" or "pretheoretically."[62] James claims to introduce no psychological theory, and certainly no metaphysical theory, into his descriptions – to presuppose, for example, no answers to the question whether the objects presented in experience really exist. The proto-phenomenological character of *The Principles of Psychology* is manifested in such passages as the following:

> Certainly a child newly born in Boston, who gets a sensation from the candle-flame which lights the bedroom, or from his diaper-pin, does not feel either of these objects to be situated in longitude 71 W. and latitude 42 N. He does not feel them to be in the third story of the house. . . . He does not, in short, know anything *about* their space-relations to anything else in the world. The flame fills its own place, the pain fills its own place; but as yet these places are neither identified with, nor discriminated from, any other places. That comes later (PP, 681–2).

These original places – neither physical nor mental – are, for James, the building blocks of our experiential world, including the self. James calls the confusion of what one knows about these places (e.g., their latitude) with our experience of them the "psychologist's fallacy." "The *great* snare of the psychologist," James writes, "is the *confusion of his own*

standpoint with that of the mental fact about which he is making his report" (PP, 195).

To describe these noninterpreted and nonexplained "places" James invents a word: "*Scious*ness" (PP, 290). This fundamental "*scious*ness" is to be distinguished from "*con*-sciousness," which involves the awareness of one's thought as part of an enduring psychophysical entity. Sciousness presupposes neither a continuous self nor the self/world distinction – a distinction James wants to avoid commenting on *qua* "psychologist" and leave to "metaphysics." From the perspective of sciousness or the stream of thought, matter as something behind phenomena "is a postulate." So is the self. The "sheet of phenomena," James writes, swings between realities and fictions, matter and "the Thinker." Who the thinker is, however, or how many there are in the universe, are all "subjects for an ulterior metaphysical inquiry" (PP, 291). Such passages show James at his most suggestive and elusive: an empiricist who discusses not only the impressions and ideas, sense-data and somatic sensations of traditional empiricism, but a world opening out from a stream of preobjective thought, colored by a deep background of moods, attitudes, and bodily feelings.

James's notion of sciousness is meant to counter the "psychologist's fallacy" of importing what one knows about something into one's description of it. In an early chapter of *The Principles of Psychology* entitled "The Mind-Stuff Theory" James considers some examples of this type of confusion – not in psychology, but in the tradition of philosophical idealism extending from Kant to Green. The idealists' unconscious mental processes are "pure mythology," but James diagnoses a compulsion to assert their existence anyway – a tendency on the part of philosophers to say that certain mental processes "must" be there. Noticing the difference between "a sensation which we simply *have* and one which we *attend to*," the idealist takes one of these as the revelation of the underlying structure of the other; whereas for James, both states are "fresh creations" (PP, 172).

That the positing of hidden mental processes takes the form of a demand or a need is also James's point in the chapter on "The Consciousness of Self," where he considers the commonsense "insist[ence]" on the unity of the self, on our "personal identity" (PP, 320). "It is," he writes "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" (PP, 328). We are led by these protests, James asserts, into bad philosophical theory: "The 'Soul' of Metaphysics and the 'Transcendental Ego' of the Kantian Philosophy, are . . . but attempts to satisfy this urgent demand . . ." (PP, 321). We must resist this demand, James counsels, and turn back toward "the bare existence of the phenomena" (PP, 328).

The demands James counters are demands for explanation. It is not that James thinks explanations are never necessary or useful, but that in these cases the explanations don't work: "the connection of things in our knowledge is in no whit *explained* by making it the deed of an agent whose essence is self-identity and who is out of time. The agency of phenomenal thought coming and going in time is just as easy to *understand*" (PP, 348).

Readers of Wittgenstein will have recognized a resemblance between James's antitheoretical proto-phenomenology and passages in the *Investigations* such as these:

> . . . . we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place (PI, 109).
>
> Philosophy simply puts everything before us, and neither explains nor deduces anything. – Since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain. For what is hidden, for example, is of no interest to us (PI, 126).
>
> When we do philosophy, we should like to hypostatize feelings where there are none. They serve to explain our thoughts to us (PI, 598).

Unlike James, Wittgenstein does not try from the start to produce a theory or even a general description of human life, but finds that he must produce bits of theory or describe parts of human life in the course of unraveling philosophical problems. Nevertheless, he follows James in calling us away from theoretical explanations to "descriptions," often by reminding us of the character of our ordinary experience:

> Asked "Did you recognize your desk when you entered your room this morning?" – I should no doubt say "Certainly!" And yet it would be misleading to say that an act of recognition had taken place. Of course the desk was not strange to me; I was not surprised to see it, as I should have been if another one had been standing there, or some unfamiliar kind of object (PI, 601–2).

The lesson that one can recognize one's desk without an act of recognition, that one can rise up without an act of will, and that one can speak without a separate layer of thought backing up one's words are the sorts of positive lessons Wittgenstein was able to draw from James as he began reading the *Principles of Psychology* in the early 1930s. When Wittgenstein urges philosophers to return to the rough ground, it is to a landscape that he had encountered not only in his ordinary life with words, but in the "psychological" writings of William James. And when he warns that philosophers, misled by an "ideal" (PI, 103), "predicate of the thing what lies in the method of representing it" (PI, 104), he echoes, as he transposes to a more clearly philosophical register, James's warnings against the "psychologist's fallacy" of confusing one's own standpoint with that of the phenomenon one is seeking to describe.

In this chapter, I have begun to explore Wittgenstein's long engagement with *The Principles of Psychology*, beginning no later than the early 1930s and lasting into his postwar lectures and the composition of Part 2 of the *Investigations* in the late 1940s. My thesis is that Wittgenstein found not only fundamental errors in James but examples of how to proceed in philosophy, despite the fact that the two writers stand in distinct traditions of philosophy: British empiricism in the case of James, Kantian logicism in the case of Wittgenstein. This fundamental difference is, however, modified from both sides – in the naturalism and sense of historical development characteristic of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, in James's proto-phenomenology and his break with the psychological atomism of Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Mill.

Two great concerns dominate the *Investigations*: the human self and the nature of language. In this chapter I have considered James's contribution to Wittgenstein's discussions of the will, part of his "philosophical psychology"; and Wittgenstein's criticisms of James on the "if-feeling," a cornerstone of his philosophy of language. In the following two chapters I will consider in greater detail the influence of *The Principles*, first on Wittgenstein's discussions of the self, then on his views about language.

4

What Is It Like to Be a Human Being?

> "Are you not really a behaviorist in disguise? Aren't you at bottom really saying that everything except human behavior is a fiction?" – If I do speak of a fiction, then it is of a *grammatical* fiction (PI, 307).

As befits the empiricist he claims to be in *The Principles of Psychology*, James offers an account of the self based on experience; and in accord with his own particular slant in psychology, he thinks of the relevant experience as predominantly introspective. Like Hume, James doubts our ability to introspect anything we can call the central self. Yet he is drawn, mistakenly, as Wittgenstein sees it, into the claim that he experiences this self "in the head or between the head and throat" (PP, 288). Nevertheless, James's chapter "The Consciousness of Self," provides a richly detailed account of the human self – of what it is like to be a human being, to use Thomas Nagel's memorable and useful phrase.[1] Wittgenstein engages parts of this chapter explicitly in *Philosophical Investigations* and in typescripts and lectures of the late 1940s. As always, James comes in for criticism for confusing logical or grammatical connections with empirical ones, and for seeking answers to logical questions through empirical inquiry. Wittgenstein joins James, however, in countering traditional, more or less Cartesian, views of the self – according to which the self occupies a domain entirely separated from the body. For James, the traditional solitary self is spread out – distributed "across the face of the lived-world" as Bruce Wilshire has put it.[2] Wittgenstein also "distributes the self," but logically or

grammatically rather than psychologically: into first-person and third-person uses of language and, more generally, into forms of human life, natural expressions, and private (but not "necessarily private") experiences.

Wittgenstein approaches the self through the grammar of such *words* as "self," "I," "wish," "believe," and others. Therefore it may seem (and this is not entirely mistaken) that Wittgenstein is more interested in language than in the things denoted by language, and so is not interested in the self in the full-blooded way that traditional philosophers such as Plato, let alone psychologists such as James, are. Yet Wittgenstein's *Investigations* tells us quite a lot about human beings – for example, that they chat and pray and order and build things; that they consider facial expressions important; care for those who are in pain; and write symphonies. As Norman Malcolm states: Wittgenstein "is trying to get his reader to think of how the words are tied up with human life, with patterns of response, in thought and action. His conceptual studies are a kind of anthropology. His descriptions of the human forms of life on which our concepts are based make us aware of the kind of creature we are."[3] Or as Cavell puts it, the *Investigations* constitutes a "portrait of the human self, on a par with Locke's *Essay*, Hume's *Treatise*, Kant's *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*. . . ."[4] The portrait emerges not only from Wittgenstein's many striking remarks about human beings (e.g., "the human body is the best picture of the human soul") and his descriptions of various forms of human life, but in the philosophical characters who take part in the dialogues of the *Investigations*. Wittgenstein shows as well as tells us what it is like to be a human being.

1

James's chapter on "The Consciousness of Self" is even longer than the preceding chapter on "The Stream of Thought," running to one hundred pages, versus the mere sixty pages of "The Stream." The discussion proceeds under a bewildering variety of headings, but the main division of the chapter is between "The Empirical Self or Me" (PP, 279) and "The Pure Ego" (PP, 314). Under the latter heading James discusses the theories of Locke, Kant, Hume, Aquinas, and Mill (once again departing from his official role as an empirical psychologist).

Under the former heading he issues the infamous remark about the self being felt between the head and throat. The chapter concludes, or tails off, with a fascinating discussion of "The Mutations of the Self," including narratives about losses of memory, false memory, multiple personality (PP, 367), and mediumships (PP, 371). Despite its tensions and confusions – indeed in some cases because of them – it remains a rich, readable, and wise document.

James's discussion of "the empirical self" proceeds under three subheadings: "the material self, "the social self," and "the spiritual self" (PP, 280). By the first of these James means first and foremost our bodies, but also certain things and persons that play special roles in our lives. I am centrally my body, according to James's account of "the material self," but I am also my style of dress, my car, my children, and my home. James eloquently describes the *variety* of material things one thinks of as constituting one's self:

> The body is the innermost part of *the material Self* in each of us; and certain parts of the body seem more intimately ours than the rest. The clothes come next. . . . Next, our immediate family is part of ourselves. Our father and mother, our wife and babes, are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. When they die, a part of our very selves is gone. If they do anything wrong, it is our shame. If they are insulted, our anger flashes forth as readily as if we stood in their place. Our home comes next. Its scenes are part of our life; its aspects awaken the tenderest feelings of affection; . . . (PP, 280).

Here is James's introspective method at its most effectively personal, for he knows about such things as shame at the misdeeds of a family member or the tenderest affection for his home not from his psychology laboratory, but from his own experience. The claim that "When they die, a part of our very selves is gone" is a paradigmatic introspective claim – not, it should be noted, about some ghostly substance or vague feelings, but about complex, concrete experiences. Notice also that James discusses these *feelings* under the heading "material self," thereby blurring the distinction – as he is wont to do – between the physical and the mental.

Our material self, James continues, includes various items of property, particularly "those which are saturated with our labor." Most of us would "feel personally annihilated if a life-long construction of [our] hands or brains – say an entomological collection or an extensive work in manuscript – were suddenly swept away" (PP, 281). If we lose a

valuable piece of property we feel disappointment at foregoing the pleasure of using or having it; but, over and above this sense of loss we experience

> a sense of the shrinkage of our personality, a partial conversion of ourselves to nothingness, which is a psychological phenomenon by itself. We are all at once assimilated to the tramps and poor devils whom we so despise, and at the same time removed farther than ever away from the happy sons of earth who lord it over land and sea and men in the full-blown lustihood that wealth and power can give . . . (PP, 281).

Here again is the philosopher as human being whom Wittgenstein admired in the pages of *Varieties.* James writes as one ("We are all") who has himself experienced loss, and who consistently lives at a distance ("farther than ever") from "the happy sons of earth."

Passing from the "material self" to the "social self," James defines it as "the recognition" we get from others. In a way James departs here from his introspective method, for he is concerned with others' experiences of oneself; but in another way he is consistently introspective, for he considers the role such experiences of me by others play in *my own* sense of self. Here is his first example:

> No more fiendish punishment could be devised, than that one should be turned loose in society and remain absolutely unnoticed by all the members thereof. If no one turned round when we entered, answered when we spoke, or minded what we did, but if every person we met "cut us dead," and acted as if we were non-existing things, a kind of rage and impotent despair would ere long well up in us, from which the cruelest bodily torture would be a relief . . . (PP, 281).

Much like the Hegelians whom he opposes, James is saying that we are in part constituted by others. Again the introspection is James's own, his own tendency to rage and despair at being "cut" the basis for his claim about what "would ere long well up in us."

Corresponding, then, to our multiple social relationships is a series of social selves. Each person has "*as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him* and carry an image of him in their mind. To wound any one of these his images is to wound him" (PP, 281–2). James expands his discussion of the social self to include not only the "images" people have of us, but the behavior that is responsible for those images. For we show different sides of ourselves to different

people or groups: "Many a youth who is demure enough before his parents and teachers, swears and swaggers like a pirate among his 'tough' young friends. We do not show ourselves to our children as to our club-companions, to our customers as to the laborers we employ, to our own masters and employers as to our intimate friends" (PP, 282). To gain or lose a friend is thus to gain or lose a possibility of oneself. "That mood," as Emerson states, "into which a friend can bring us, is his dominion over us."[5]

James turns next to the "Spiritual Self," roughly corresponding to what we would today call one's personality, but viewed from "inside." The "spiritual self" is the person's "inner or subjective being, his psychic faculties or dispositions." These dispositions are "the most enduring and intimate part of the self," the part with which we most strongly identify: "We take a purer self-satisfaction when we think of our ability to argue and discriminate, of our moral sensibility and conscience, of our indomitable will, than when we survey any of our other possessions" (PP, 283). James ties his discussion to the previously introduced idea of the stream of thought, for he writes that the spiritual self consists of "the entire stream of our personal consciousness," and more narrowly considered, "the present 'segment' or 'section' of that stream" (PP, 284). Within the stream of thought lie emotions, pains and pleasures, and thoughts both of the outer world and of our own thinking. James's claim that we take greater satisfaction when we consider our ability to argue than when we think of our other attributes is another paradigm of his introspective practice.

Despite James's dispersal of our self into the material, social, and spiritual, and of the spiritual in turn into thoughts and feelings, James still searches for – and claims to find within the empirically ascertainable domain of the "spiritual self" – one central, important portion of the stream: "a sort of innermost centre within the circle," a "*self of all the other selves*" (PP, 285). This is the point at which, according to Wittgenstein, his thought goes off the rails.

James begins his description of this "self of selves" with the claim that it is "the *active* element in all consciousness," something in us "which seems to *go out* to meet these qualities and contents, whilst they seem to *come in* to be received by it. It is what welcomes or rejects" (PP, 285). Leaving aside the metaphysical question of whether there is a self behind this active but experienced element, James insists that

"this central part of the Self is *felt*. . . ." (PP, 286). How, then, James asks himself, *is* this central self felt; what is the experience of this self of selves? Saying it is an active element of "spontaneity" that welcomes or opposes, appropriates or disowns, is still too general a description. James finds that it is "*really a feeling of bodily activities whose exact nature is by most men overlooked*" (PP, 288). Here he breaks with the dominant European *ideational* tradition running through Descartes, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume.

In claiming that the self of selves is "a feeling of bodily activities," James may seem to offer a version of behaviorism, especially when the bodily activities he mentions include such behavior as "movements of the muscles of the brows and eyelids" (PP, 288). Yet his claim concerns the introspected *feelings* of these "bodily activities," rather than the activities. James also brackets the metaphysical question of whether these feelings are identical with brain and other physiological activity. In the extraordinary passage in the following text – ending with lines Wittgenstein incorporated, in English, into the German text of *Philosophical Investigations*[6] – James passes from a stage of Humean skepticism about our ability to introspect a self to an introspective report of his consciousness as he tries to catch his self thinking:

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. . . . My brain appears to me as if all shot across with lines of direction, of which I have become conscious as my attention has shifted from one sense-organ to another, in passing to successive outer things, or in following trains of varying sense-ideas.

When I try to remember or reflect, the movements in question, instead of being directed towards the periphery, seem to come from the periphery inwards and feel like a sort of *withdrawal* from the outer world. As far as I can detect, these feelings are due to an actual rolling outwards and upwards of the eyeballs, such as I believe occurs in me in sleep . . . .

In consenting and negating, and in making a mental effort, the movements seem more complex, and I find them harder to describe. The opening and closing of the glottis play a great part in these operations, and, less distinctly, the movements of the soft palate, etc., shutting off the posterior nares from the mouth. My glottis is like a sensitive valve, intercepting my breath instantaneously at every mental hesitation or felt aversion to the objects of my thought, and as quickly opening, to let the air pass through my throat and nose, the moment the repugnance is overcome. The feeling of the movement of this

air is, in me, one strong ingredient of the feeling of assent. The movements of the muscles of the brow and eyelids also respond very sensitively to every fluctuation in the agreeableness or disagreeableness of what comes before my mind.

In a sense, then, it may truly be said that, in one person at least, *the 'Self of selves,' when carefully examined, is found to consist mainly of the collection of these peculiar motions in the head or between the head and throat*... (PP, 287–8).

James here couples a physiological and an introspective orientation – as one might expect from a professor of psychology whose first appointment was in anatomy and physiology. The third paragraph particularly, with its remarks about the glottis and the nares (nostrils or nasal passages) shows the influence of James's physiological training and expertise. Still, following his introspective method, James describes the *feelings* in his glottis or brain. When he writes that the brain appears "as if all shot across with lines of direction," he is not looking at his brain on an operating table, but rather attending to feelings and centers of consciousness *perceived or felt* as forming in areas of his head.

2

Wittgenstein refers to the preceding passage, and to James, in the midst of a discussion of imagination, consciousness, and self-identity at section 413 of *Investigations*:

Here we have a case of introspection, not unlike that from which William James got the idea that the "self" consisted mainly of "peculiar motions in the head and between the head and throat." And James's introspection showed, not the meaning of the word "self" (so far as it means something like "person," "human being," "he himself," "I myself"), nor any analysis of such a thing, but the state of a philosopher's attention when he says the word "self" to himself and tries to analyze its meaning. (And a good deal could be learned from this.)

Wittgenstein then adds, in a new paragraph: "You think that after all you must be weaving a piece of cloth: because you are sitting at a loom – even if it is empty – and going through the motions of weaving" (PI, 414).

Given the reference to James in section 413, we can reasonably take the word "you" that begins section 414 to refer primarily to James. James, then, is a member of the "internal audience"[7] of the

Investigations: an explicitly posited respondent for, or addressee of, Wittgenstein's admonitions. (Russell and Frege are *mentioned* in the *Investigations*, but they aren't addressed.) Notice that Wittgenstein quite matter-of-factly refers to James as a philosopher, if a confused one; his writings are a place to study the genesis of quintessentially *philosophical* problems.

Wittgenstein charges James with thinking he must be weaving a piece of cloth – the science of introspective psychology – when in fact he is only "going through the motions of weaving." This criticism ties in with Wittgenstein's charge in the final section of *Investigations* Part 2:

> The confusion and barrenness of psychology is not to be explained by calling it a "young science"; its state is not comparable with that of physics, for instance, in its beginnings. . . . For in psychology there are experimental methods and conceptual confusion. . . . The existence of the experimental method makes us think we have the means of solving the problems which trouble us; though problem and method pass one another by (PI, p. 232).

There is some irony in Wittgenstein's charge that James confuses his own standpoint or experience ("the state of a philosopher's attention") with the object to which he is supposedly attending – "the self." For confusing one's own standpoint with that of the phenomena one is analyzing is just what James had called "the psychologist's fallacy." But Wittgenstein's charge cuts deeper: James not only confuses his standpoint with that of the phenomena, but in a certain sense, there are no phenomena – at least no phenomena relevant to the problem that motivates him, which is a philosophical or grammatical problem.

That there *could be* such phenomena is the illusion from which James suffers. He searches for the "self of selves" in an allegedly scientific (introspective) context that is detached from the ordinary contexts in which we employ the word "self" – to some of which he shows himself to be quite sensitive elsewhere in the chapter. Wittgenstein's inquiry is "critical" in the Kantian sense: he examines the kind of answers we are able to give, rather than trying to give them, and he considers specific illusions that arise when we employ words outside of the language games in which they find "comprehensible employment."[8] Wittgenstein continued to think of James as someone who had succumbed to these illusions. In a discussion of intention in

the late typescript published as *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Wittgenstein worries about someone who says that he experiences a subtle intending that most people miss. Is this not, he writes, "simply an illusion (like that in which someone believes that he feels thinking in his head)? One uses inappropriate concepts to form the *picture* of the processes. (Cf. James)" (RPP, 193).

The paragraphs preceding Wittgenstein's criticism of James on the self at section 413 of *Investigations* are directed not only against James's view that the self of selves might be introspected, but against a related Jamesian view about personal identity: that the particular self an experience belongs to is a contingent matter, to be determined by observation or introspection. James expresses this view in "The Pure Ego," the second main section of "The Consciousness of Self" chapter, under the heading "The Sense of Personal Identity." This title alone suggests what turns out to be the case, that for James identity will be the sort of thing we can have a *sense of*. From this point of view it doesn't matter whether the identity in question is one's own or someone else's: "there is nothing more remarkable in making the judgment of sameness in the first person than in the second or third. The intellectual operations seem essentially alike, whether I say 'I am the same,' or whether I say 'the pen is the same, as yesterday"' (PP, 315).

James claims that the sense of personal identity involves a "thought" that thinks the identity of "a present self and a self of yesterday" (PP, 315). This thought might be true or false, James continues, but in either case "it would exist as a *feeling* all the same," a feeling that "*I am the same self that I was yesterday*." (Professor Anscombe told me that this was a sentence on which Wittgenstein dwelt in his postwar lectures.) What, then is this feeling? "Warmth and intimacy," James answers, in a passage of exquisite phenomenological description and deep confusion:

> . . . whatever the thought we are criticizing 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 psychological 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 . . . (PP, 316).

Our remoter selves, James continues, are like cattle through which we sort to find our brand, those from which our own "animal warmth" or "aroma" emanate (PP, 317). James concludes with a dramatic example of the consequences to which his theory leads. Two boys, Peter and Paul, wake up in the same bed. Despite having known each others' thoughts the night before, and their physical proximity throughout the night and into the morning, Paul never mistakes Peter's thoughts for his own, nor does Peter mistake Paul's for his. Why not? James answers: because of the warmth Peter's ideas have for Peter but not for Paul, and the warmth Paul's ideas have for Paul but not for Peter. "Peter, awakening in the same bed with Paul, and recalling what both had in mind before he went to sleep, reidentifies and appropriates the "warm" ideas as his, and is never tempted to confuse them with those cold and pale-appearing ones which he ascribes to Paul."

In the paragraphs leading up to section 413 of *Philosophical Investigations*, where James is mentioned, Wittgenstein criticizes a view about personal identity much like that of James.[9] He imagines a case in which, as with Peter and Paul, we discover that an idea – in this case a painful sensation – is ours:

> Imagine several people standing in a ring, and me among them. One of us, sometimes this one, sometimes that, is connected to the poles of an electrical machine without our being able to see this. I observe the faces of the others and try to see which of us has just been electrified. – Then I say: "Now I *know* who it is; for it's myself." . . . This would be a rather queer way of speaking (PI, 409).

It would be queer in several ways. In the first place, if one were shocked what one would naturally say would be "ouch!" or something of the sort; the more composed "I know who it is" seems out of place. Secondly, "I *know* it's myself" seems excessive: why not just say "It's me!"? The word "know," Wittgenstein argues throughout his later work, has its home in cases of investigation; but there is no investigation I go through to find that I've been shocked.[10] Wittgenstein's example, in which on the one hand we try to read people's faces to see who is in pain, or on the other hand, receive an electrical shock ourselves, is meant to point to the *difference* between the two cases, and to the absurdity of the idea that one *discovers* that it is, after all, one's self who feels this pain. What would it be like to know, first, that

someone is being shocked and then to learn – after a period of doubt or investigation – that it is I who is receiving the shock?

Wittgenstein employs his "ordinary language" approach to reinforce these points in section 411, which begins:

> Consider how the following questions can be applied, and how settled:
> (1) "Are these books *my* books?"
> (2) "Is this foot *my* foot?"
> (3) "Is this body *my* body?"
> (4) "Is this sensation *my* sensation?"

Each of these questions has practical (nonphilosophical) applications. Wittgenstein provides no commentary on (1), for we can easily imagine finding one's own name in a book, or someone's saying "Yes, mine are over there." The second sentence, on the other hand, sounds a bit crazy (one thinks of saying derisively: "Well, it's attached to your body isn't it?") But Wittgenstein shows that there might be "practical (nonphilosophical) applications" of this and the next sentence on his list. Regarding (2) he writes: "Think of cases in which my foot is anaesthetized or paralyzed. Under certain circumstances the question could be settled by determining whether I can feel pain in this foot." As for (3), he suggests that "one might be pointing to a mirror-image." What then of (4), which is just the question James thinks he can ask about Peter's and Paul's sensations – his answer being that it is by feelings of warmth and intimacy that each identifies his own sensations. Wittgenstein's response is *not* to find a situation in ordinary language in which this sentence makes sense, but to ask:

> Which sensation does one mean by "*this*" one? That is: how is one using the demonstrative pronoun here? Certainly otherwise than in the first example! Here confusion occurs because one imagines that by directing one's attention to a sensation one is pointing to it (PI, 411).

As a setting for the first example one might imagine two bookbags on a library bench. A student picks up one of the bags, and says to another, "Are these my books?" Here there are several bookbags that could be hers, although at most one of the two bags is actually hers. An investigation can determine which is which, for example, by disclosing her wallet in one of the bags. Wittgenstein's questions are meant to

prompt the thought: Of which sensation can I say, "no, this one's not mine, it's yours"? Wittgenstein suggests that there really isn't a legitimate use for sentence (4) – certainly not the sort of use James imagines, where there is *an answer to the question for each of everyone's sensations and thoughts.*

I don't see how James can be rescued from the absurdity of supposing that I could experience a sensation and still question whether it is mine or that of someone else. Such a question seems to make more sense directed at some of the components of what James calls the "material self": I can question, for example, whether this house or suit is really mine, or even whether this "babe" is mine – if, for example, I imagine myself in the maternity ward of a hospital, seeing my daughter for the first time.

The final sentence of section 411 of *Investigations* criticizes the whole project of introspection, of "directing one's attention" inward. Wittgenstein writes of a sort of "giddiness" as one turns one's attention inward, and one's astonished exclamation: "THIS is supposed to be produced by a process in the brain!" He characterizes this inward attention as involving "a particular act of gazing . . . the brows not contracted (as they mostly are when I am interested in a particular object)," and finds it "the queerest thing there could be!"

As with sentences (1), (2), and (3) of section 411, the sentence "THIS is produced by a process in the brain!" is strange or out of order only when it is used in certain situations; for it can be used quite legitimately, as Wittgenstein points out: "I could have said it in the course of an experiment whose purpose was to show that an effect of light which I see is produced by stimulation of a particular part of the brain" (PI, 412). But the case that induces giddiness is precisely one in which the sentence is not uttered "in the surroundings in which it would have had an everyday and unparadoxical sense," but in the quite peculiar surroundings of introspective psychology that Wittgenstein calls "'turning my attention on my own consciousness,"' with a "vacant glance . . . *like* that of someone admiring the illumination of the sky and drinking in the light." This is the context in which Wittgenstein refers to James at the beginning of section 413: "Here we have a case of introspection, not unlike that from which William James got the idea that the 'self' consisted in peculiar motions in the head and between the head and throat."

James certainly uses his introspective method to search for the "self of selves," but it is hard to recognize James in the "vacant glance" and "particular act of gazing" Wittgenstein describes in section 412. Many of James's introspective claims – for example, that "we take a purer self-satisfaction when we think of our ability to argue" than when we think of other virtues – are based on no such act of gazing. Nor does Wittgenstein's language of staring quite fit the "head and throat" case, which is not visual – James doesn't stare at his throat. I don't deny that a vacant stare (in the sense of not looking at anything in particular) can be a mark of introspection, only that it must attend introspection, and that this is something James clearly says. In any case, Wittgenstein's basic point is that the giddiness of the search for this "self of selves" comes because one doesn't quite know where to look, and that this is a sign of conceptual confusion.[11]

In the remarks after section 413, Wittgenstein moves from an attack on the idea that one could discover which sensations are one's own to an attack on the idea that one could discover that one is conscious. Section 416 opens with a "voice of temptation"[12] (whose words are in quotation marks), defending the possibility of introspecting consciousness: "'Human beings agree in saying that they see, hear, feel, and so on. . . . So they are their own witnesses that they have *consciousness.*'"[13] To this statement, the "voice of authority" (not in quotation marks) replies: "But how strange this is! Whom do I really inform, if I say "I have consciousness"? What is the purpose of saying this to myself, and how can another person understand me?" This dialogue takes place against the background of Wittgenstein's landscape of language – a network of activities or games, each with its use, like buying apples at the growers' market, reporting a car accident, telling a joke, or recommending a new CD. The criticism here ("whom do I really inform?") is that the claim that we have consciousness – as used by philosophers – has no place in the landscape, and so in that sense, no meaning.

Section 418 begins with the question: "Is my having consciousness a fact of experience?" – to which the implied answer seems to be "no." This does not mean that I'm *not* conscious, for Wittgenstein certainly doesn't want to deny that we are conscious.[14] If "my having consciousness" is not a "fact of experience," perhaps that is not because it's not a fact, but because it's not "of" experience, not something we could discover through experience. We can't *discover* that we are

conscious because consciousness is, as it were, already there, part of the background to what we say and do; it is, as Wittgenstein says in another context, "part of the framework on which the working of our language is based" (PI, 240).[15] We can try to imagine that the people around us in the street are autonoma, we can attend movies about body snatchers and so on, but we can't and we don't *live* with or act according to this thought:

just try to keep hold of this idea in the midst of your ordinary intercourse with others, in the street, say! Say to yourself, for example: "The children over there are mere automata; all their liveliness is mere automatism." And you will either find these words becoming quite meaningless; or you will produce in yourself some kind of uncanny feeling, or something of the sort (PI, 420).

Here again the uncanny feeling registers a departure from the attunements of our ordinary language and thinking. It is a sign of nonsense; nonsense that arises from trying either to assert or to question our bedrock beliefs.

3

Wittgenstein speaks of grammatical fictions and illusions, but there are also grammatical realities, forms of human life. At times, he seems as much interested in a survey, or in Hacker's translation of "übersicht," a "surview" of our language games, as he is in uncovering and dispelling the illusions that confuse the philosopher in each of us. We obtain a proper surview, Hacker writes, "when we grasp the grammar of language, not merely in the sense in which the ordinary speaker does, but in the sense of being able to survey the interconnections of rules for the use of expressions."[16] Wittgenstein's systematic aims, as well as his focus on grammar, are evident in the "plan for the treatment of psychological concepts" on which he worked in the late forties:

Psychological verbs characterized by the fact that the third person of the present is to be verified by observation, the first person not. Sentences in the third person of the present: information. In the first person present: expression. ((Not quite right.)) (Z, 472).[17]

Emotions. Common to them: genuine duration, a course. (Rage flares up, abates, vanishes, and likewise joy, depression, fear.)

Distinction from sensations: they are not localized (nor yet diffuse!).
Common: they have characteristic expression-behavior. (Facial expression) (Z, 488).[18]

The first sentence of this plan identifies a basic grammatical feature of the psychological, one that Wittgenstein shows us in his little joke at section 407 of *Investigations*: "It would be possible to imagine someone groaning out: "Someone is in pain – I don't know who!" – and our then hurrying to help him, the one who groaned." The point is that finding out who's in pain when it's you is *not* part of the game – a "fact" about our language that shows the lineaments, the "physiognomy" of our concept of pain, hence what pain is. Wittgenstein resists the "Cartesian" idea that the pain is an entity or event in my mind, known by me immediately, but only inferred by someone else.

Part of Wittgenstein's therapy is to emphasize our "characteristic expression-behavior," as in the third paragraph of the preceding plan. As we will see in section 4, Wittgenstein finds support for this emphasis in James's theory of the emotions. In this section, however, I will consider aspects of Wittgenstein's thinking about psychological concepts that place him far from James, with a foray into the large and fruitful subject of the so-called "private language argument."

Bracketing this subject, as all others in the *Investigations*, is the question of Wittgenstein's therapeutic intentions. It is possible to read Wittgenstein not as putting forward a "theory of the mental" or even a "portrait of the human self," but as fundamentally responding to philosophers' obsessions, one by one, without any systematic aims. The goal, as he says at section 133 of *Philosophical Investigations*, is to bring philosophy peace. Therefore, it may be argued, even his most theoretical or visionary statements are put forward because of the *effect* they are to induce rather than any truth they may express. This version of a therapeutic interpretation relies on Wittgenstein's claims that he is only describing and not explaining, and that if one offered theses in philosophy they would be statements to which everyone agreed. Describing the work of the *Investigations* in this way, however, fails to register that its therapy occurs through various sorts of understanding – our understanding of the problems to which certain views lead, and our progress in commanding a clear view of the phenomena that trouble us. Wittgenstein is no relativist: he holds that there are better and

worse, correct and mistaken, portrayals of language, human beings, knowledge, and mathematics.

In my view, Wittgenstein's "treatment" of the philosopher's "illness" (PI, 255) proceeds on several fronts: he offers and considers theses, presents powerful arguments, offers a range of descriptions, and gives instructions. The *Investigations* accordingly takes a variety of forms. Many of Wittgenstein's best-known remarks are injunctions or invitations, not so much stating something as telling us what to do:

> Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples . . . (PI, 23).
> Think of the various points of view from which one can classify tools or chessmen (PI, 17).
> Don't say: "There *must* be something common, or they would not be called 'games'" – but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all" (PI, 65).

Wittgenstein also offers philosophers a vision of things: for example, a portrait of the self that occupies territory between behaviorism and Cartesian dualism. But because many of Wittgenstein's remarks are negative – exposés of philosophical "language on holiday" – it is not always easy to see what the portrait looks like. One brush stroke in that portrait, to which I shall return in Chapter 6, is this sentence: "The human body is the best picture of the human soul" (PI, p. 178). This remark both emphasizes the body, and uses without criticism a word ("soul") that would be avoided by behaviorists. The background for this and other remarks in Part 2 of the *Investigations* is Wittgenstein's discussion of the possibility of a private language, to which I now turn.

There is agreement neither about where the "private language argument" is stated in the *Investigations*, nor about what it is. It was for some time thought to begin at section 243 of *Philosophical Investigations*, where Wittgenstein considers whether someone might write down his "feelings, moods and the rest – for his private use . . . ." As Saul Kripke pointed out, however,[19] an argument basic to Wittgenstein's discussion occurs at section 202 of *Investigations*, where Wittgenstein writes: "'obeying a rule' is a practice. And to *think* one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately': otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it."

This argument can be presented as a *reductio ad absurdum.* If one thinks one can obey a rule privately, one will be unable to distinguish between thinking one is obeying a rule and actually obeying it. But this distinction is crucial to the notion of a rule; without it, one does not have a rule but only, as it were, the impression of a rule.[20] Another way to put the point is to say, as Wittgenstein does, that a rule is not just constituted by a single self but by a community, whose members agree not just in various opinions, but in what Wittgenstein calls "judgments" and "form of life" (PI, 241–2).[21]

Wittgenstein applies the argument about rules at section 202 in *Philosophical Investigations* to "inner experiences" or "sensations" at sections 243 and 258:

> A human being can encourage himself, give himself orders, obey, blame and punish himself; he can ask himself a question and answer it. . . .
>
> But could we also imagine a language in which a person could write down or give vocal expression to his inner experiences – his feelings, moods, and the rest – for his private use? – Well, can't we do so in our ordinary language? – But that is not what I mean. The individual words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language (PI, 243).

The dialogue proceeds without quotation marks, but there is a voice of authority or instruction who uses the word "I" and asks whether we can really imagine a private language. The question, then, is one of possibility. The words of a private language are to refer "to what can only be known to the person speaking." Alternatively, a private language is one that "another person cannot understand." The modal expressions "can only" and "cannot" are crucial. Wittgenstein is not talking about private codes that are difficult to crack, for these *can* be understood by others. The private language is to be one that has, and *can only* have, one speaker. In such a language, however, there would be "no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to be is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right'" (PI, 258).

As Gale argues, James embraces a key component of the private language position in the "Conception" chapter of *The Principles.*[22] "Each thought," James writes:

decides, by its own authority, which, out of all the conceptive functions open to it, it shall now renew; with which other thought it shall identify itself as a conceiver, and just how far. "The same A which I once meant," it says, "I shall now mean again, and mean it with C as its predicate (or what not) instead of B, as before" (PP, 442 n. 6).

James here runs together the issue of personal identity with that of the identity of thoughts, but he makes the same point about both: that "I" determine, by some act of appropriation, the sameness of, on the one hand, myself, and, on the other hand, my thoughts. Each thought at a moment has the "authority," James is saying, to constitute meaning, and it can do so apart from "everything else in the world": "Conceptualism says the mind can conceive any quality or relation it pleases, and mean nothing but it, in isolation from everything else in the world. This is, of course, the doctrine we have professed" (PP, 444). Because of his tendency to treat both meaning and the self from "an exclusively first-person perspective"[23] James may thus have been one of Wittgenstein's targets in his discussions of a private language, although Wittgenstein does not cite the passages previously mentioned either in the *Investigations* or in his notebooks.

Wittgenstein's discussions in the private-language section of the *Investigations* call attention to what our language is actually like – bringing our words back "from their metaphysical to their everyday use" (PI, 116) – or bringing philosophers back, because the words take care of themselves very well. As the "plan for the treatment of psychological concepts" indicates, our words for sensations, emotions (and presumably other psychological states) are tied up with what Wittgenstein calls "characteristic expression-behavior," including facial expressions. Wittgenstein introduces the term "natural expressions" in two key paragraphs in the private-language section of the *Investigations*:

Now, what about the language which describes my inner experiences and which only I myself can understand? *How* do I use words to stand for my sensations? – As we ordinarily do? Then are my words for sensations tied up [verknüpft] with my natural expressions of sensation? In that case my language is not a "private" one. Someone else might understand it as well as I. . . .
What would it be like if human beings showed no outward signs of pain (did not groan, grimace, etc.)? Then it would be impossible to teach a child the use of the word 'tooth-ache'." – Well, let's assume the child is a genius and

itself invents a name for the sensation! – But then, of course, he couldn't make himself understood when he used the word (PI, 256–7).

Again, we are offered a definition or necessary condition of a private language: it is one that no one else "might understand." The point is the same as at section 243: a private language cannot be understood by anyone else; it is not the case that it *might* be so understood. (The passage also contains one of Wittgenstein's better philosophical jokes.)

In the public language that we all understand, our words for sensations (like pain, tickles, colors, pleasures . . .) are "tied up with . . . natural expressions of sensation." These expressions are, of course, expressions of the body, as is clear from the examples – "groan, grimace" – Wittgenstein gives. The nature of this tie between words and behavior is indicated, as often in the *Investigations*, by thinking about how we learn these expressions, about our education or initiation into language. Here the "natural expressions" play a determinative role. The mother knows the child hurts – and is able to teach the word "pain" – when the child draws back with a cry from a hot pan on the stove, or points to the limb "where it hurts." The word *pain* is taught in these and numerous similar, ordinary ways.

The practices of the linguistic community, themselves intertwined with the natural expressions of pain, are the stage-setting that allows the word "pain" to play its role. Wittgenstein suggests that pain language is used in place of "the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation," and thus becomes a new form of "pain-behaviour." Does this then amount to the claim that "pain" means crying? On the contrary, Wittgenstein answers, "the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it" (PI, 244).

Crying is not a cultural phenomenon but a biological one, and in the case of pain, as Wittgenstein writes in *Zettel*: "[o]ur language-game is an extension of primitive behavior. (For our language-game is behavior.) (Instinct)" (Z, 545). Wittgenstein's word "instinct" marks what Cavell calls the biological or vertical dimension of our human form of life – as opposed to its cultural or "ethnological" dimension. The differences, Cavell writes, between

coronations and inaugurations, or between a barter and a credit system . . . are differences within the plane, the horizon, of the social, of human society. The biological or vertical sense of form of life recalls differences between the

human and so-called "lower" or "higher" forms of life, between, say, poking at your food, perhaps with a fork, and pawing at it, or pecking at it. . . . also the specific strength and scale of the human body and of the human senses and of the human voice.[24]

Pain is not just behavior or the expression of pain – there's an enormous difference between shamming and being in pain – but pain is still grammatically tied up with its expression, and its expression is not just conventional, but instinctive or biological. In *The False Prison*, Pears suggests this formulation: "the concept has a pre-linguistic structure and when we plant the word 'pain' in it, it takes."[25]

Why then do we find the idea of a private language attractive? Why do we have so much trouble seeing the lineaments of our psychological concepts? The story Wittgenstein tells or suggests is reminiscent of that told by Kant in the opening of the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "Human reason has this peculiar fate that in one species of its knowledge it is burdened by questions which, as prescribed by the very nature of reason itself, it is not able to ignore, but which, as transcending all its powers, it is also not able to answer."[26] It is as if our knowledge of others is burdened by questions – of authenticity, adequate expression, privacy or hiddenness – that we can't ignore, but also cannot answer. For both Kant and Wittgenstein, the solution to such questions is to be found not by answering them but by restraining our asking within its proper limits – confining our inquiries to the field of possible experience for Kant, returning to the forms of life in which ordinary language has its home for Wittgenstein. This means, however, that we must accept what Cavell has called "the truth in skepticism."[27]

Cavell gives a psychological reading to the Kantian idea that we are burdened by questions we cannot answer by speaking of our "disappointment" with our criteria: as though, he writes, "we have, or have lost, some picture of what knowing another, or being known by another would really come to – a harmony, a concord, a union, a transparence, a governance, a power – against which our actual successes at knowing, and being known, are poor things."[28] This disappointment, Cavell argues, underlies the philosopher's search for a more perfect, for example, a more certain, knowledge of other minds. Our knowledge of our own inner states, the private linguist thinks, provides the model for an intimacy we cannot have with others. Wittgenstein's task,

according to Cavell, is to trace not only "our attunements" with criteria in our ordinary life with language, but our "disappointment" and "repudiation" of them in philosophy.[29] Real philosophical progress, for Wittgenstein, lies in the power to return to the ordinary, to accept our human forms of life – however distant they may be from some imagined ideal. But these ideals have a hold on us.

Wittgenstein's portrait of the self is thus presented both in terms of publicly delineated forms of life, and in terms of our human desire to transcend the human, to achieve the sublime. While James emphasizes that our philosophical outlooks reflect our individual temperaments and characters, there is no sense in James's *Principles of Psychology* that philosophy needs therapy because it is riddled with illusion, or that it stems from an ineliminable disappointment with human forms of life. James thinks of the self in exclusively experiential rather than conceptual or grammatical terms, and he embraces a key component of the private-language argument – that I have the power to determine a thought as "the same thought." In their contrasting approaches to the human self, then, the distance between James and Wittgenstein reaches its maximum. Nevertheless, when Wittgenstein discusses the emotions, a subject to which I now turn, he once again finds James's *Principles* not only in error, but of considerable help.

4

The Principles's chapter on "The Emotions" presents various theories and James's usual proliferation of examples. Throughout its pages, James sounds a theme that would also be sounded by Wittgenstein: "how much our mental life is knit up with our corporeal frame" (PP, 1082).[30] The chapter opens with a long quotation on "the physiognomy of grief" from the Danish physiologist Carl Lange, who describes the grieving person as, among other things, walking "slowly, unsteadily, dragging his feet and hanging his arms," with a weak voice and a tendency to weep quietly. Weeping is, of course, a bodily phenomenon, with its tears, red eyes, shaking, and so forth (PP, 1059, 1060). James distinguishes the "sobbing storms" of grief from the "periods of calm" that are equally characteristic of it, and adds, in a typical bit of introspection: "There is an excitement during the crying fit which is not without a certain pungent pleasure of its own; but it would take a genius

for felicity to discover any dash of redeeming quality in the feeling of dry and shrunken sorrow" (PP, 1061). James also considers Darwin's discussion of fear in his *Expression of the Emotions,* an emotion often preceded by astonishment, with the eyes and mouth open, eyebrows raised, salivary glands dry, a "cold sweat," tremors, "a strong tendency to yawn," etc. (PP, 1062).

Traditional discussions of the emotions, James complains, amount to little more than lists or catalogs, with "no one central point of view" or "generative principle" (PP, 1064). James claims to provide such a principle with the "physiological theory" of the emotions that he and Lange had broached independently in 1885. Their basic idea is that, rather than emotion causing its bodily expression, emotion "follows upon the bodily expression," at least in such "coarser emotions" as grief, fear, rage, and love:

> Our natural way of thinking about these coarser emotions is that the mental perception of some fact excites the mental affection called the emotion, and that this latter state of mind gives rise to the bodily expression. My theory, on the contrary, is that *the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion.* Common-sense says, we lose our fortune, are sorry and weep; we meet a bear, are frightened and run; we are insulted by a rival, are angry and strike. The hypothesis here to be defended says that this order of sequence is incorrect . . . that we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble . . ." (PP, 1065–6).

James's remarks, based on introspection as they officially are, tend nevertheless toward an account of the mental in which behavior plays a crucial role. James soon arrives at what he calls "the vital point" of his theory: if we abstract all bodily feelings from our consciousness of a strong emotion "*we find we have nothing left behind,* no "mind-stuff" out of which the emotion can be constituted, and that a cold and neutral state of intellectual perception is all that remains" (PP, 1067).

In the case of emotion at least, mind without "bodily symptoms" is "nothing." James illustrates the point with respect to grief. What, he asks, would grief be "without its tears, its sobs, its suffocation of the heart, its pang in the breast-bone?" He answers: "A feelingless cognition that certain circumstances are deplorable, and nothing more." As so often in interesting passages of *The Principles,* James's

description bleeds off from introspection into phenomenology, or a neutral monism that gives equal weight to the physical and mental poles of experience (he later called this "radical empiricism"). James's description of grief accordingly mentions not just *feelings* of tears, but *actual* "tears" and "sobs." The body is so centrally present in James's account that he feels he has to fend off the charge that he is a materialist. His position, he states, is "neither more nor less materialistic than any other view which says that our emotions are conditioned by nervous processes" (PP, 1068).

James's discussion in the opening section of his chapter concludes with a passage anticipating his later pluralism and pragmatism. There is, he states, in principle "no limit" to the variety of the emotions; and the plurality of human sensibilities means that "the emotions of different individuals may vary indefinitely." As for pragmatism, James states that

> *any classification of the emotions is seen to be as true and as 'natural' as any other,* if it only serves some purpose; and such a question as "What is the 'real' or 'typical' expression of anger, or fear?" is seen to have no objective meaning at all. Instead of it we now have the question as to how a given expression may have come to exist; and that is a real question of physiological mechanics on the one hand, and of history on the other, which (like all real questions) is in essence answerable, although the answer may be hard to find (PP, 1069–70).

Here in *The Principles of Psychology,* eight years before announcing his pragmatism in a lecture at Berkeley, James holds both that truth is tied up with "some purpose," and that there is a plurality of true classifications if there is a plurality of purposes served by those classifications. He also introduces something rare in *The Principles,* namely "history" – said to help us understand "how a given expression may have come to exist." James here acknowledges the historical and cultural components of the forms of human life, as he was to do with his notion of "common sense" in *Pragmatism* – as Wittgenstein was also to do in *Philosophical Investigations.*

Wittgenstein's discussions of James's chapter on the emotions appear as early as *The Brown Book* of 1934, and they continue through to some of his latest works: the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* and the "Lectures on Philosophical Psychology" of 1946–7. Wittgenstein's concern is not with the incipient pragmatism to which I have drawn

attention, but with James's focus on natural expressions of the body. Whereas in discussing James on the self of selves he is unceasingly critical, here he credits James with considerable insight, the precise nature of which he seeks to clarify. Particularly as he discusses James's many remarks about gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice, Wittgenstein seems again to be *working with* James. Yet, not too surprisingly given his other objections to James, he has his criticisms as well.

James's theory surfaces in *The Brown Book* as Wittgenstein considers how to interpret the speech and actions of a tribe whose language we do not understand. Whether something is an order or a description, for example, is a matter of

> the role which the utterance of these signs plays in the whole practice of the language. That is to say, whether a word of the language of our tribe is rightly translated into a word of the English language depends upon the role this word plays in the whole life of the tribe; the occasions on which it is used, the expressions of emotion by which it is generally accompanied. . . . You will find that the justifications for calling something an expression of doubt, conviction, etc. largely, though of course not wholly, consist in descriptions of gestures, the play of facial expressions, and even the tone of voice. Remember at this point that the personal experiences of an emotion must in part be strictly localized experiences; for if I frown in anger I feel the muscular tension of the frown in my forehead, and if I weep, the sensations around my eyes are obviously part, and an important part, of what I feel. This is, I think, what William James meant when he said that a man doesn't cry because he is sad but that he is sad because he cries (BB, 103).

This point is often not understood, Wittgenstein continues, because we think of emotional expression as some sort of "artificial device" designed to let others know we are in a certain emotional state. If emotional expressions are natural, however, there is no sharp line between them and more conventional expressions, between, for example, weeping, raising one's voice in anger or pain, or writing an angry letter.

Wittgenstein's discussion of "the role which the utterance of . . . signs plays in the whole practice of the language" marks his emerging idea that meaning is more akin to usage, to a pattern within human life, than to any entity, objective, or subjective.[31] His main point, however, concerns the importance of human bodily expression in establishing roles for signs, particularly those for human

psychological states, and here James's views on the emotions fit naturally into the basic story Wittgenstein tells. For with the help of James's theory, Wittgenstein counters a picture of the emotions as "artificial devices" for letting others know of our emotions. For Wittgenstein as for James, our emotions are in many cases inseparable (in a sense still to be defined) from "what one might call the natural expressions of emotion." Wittgenstein comes to see the sense in which emotions are inseparable from their natural expressions as "logical," "grammatical," or "criterial," and in this respect, as we have seen, he will part company from James. Yet, in his respectful discussion ("This is, I think, what William James meant . . . ") Wittgenstein expresses his sense that James had something important to say about the role of "gestures, the play of facial expressions, and even the tone of voice" in emotional states.

Wittgenstein is so sympathetic to James in *The Brown Book* that he accepts a claim – that emotions are "in part strictly localized" – that he rejects by the time of the "Plan for the Treatment of Psychological Concepts." In the "Plan," he writes of emotions: "Distinction from sensations: they are not localized (nor yet diffuse!)."[32] What would grief be, James had asked, "without its tears, its sobs, its suffocation of the heart, its pang in the breast-bone?" Wittgenstein will come to hold that the sobs, etc. are all *criteria* of grief; but he will deny that grief is (composed of) these feelings.

A decade after *The Brown Book,* Wittgenstein returns to the James-Lange theory, armed with the charge that James misses the logical structure of grief and other emotions. This return is recorded in the notes of James's postwar lectures,[33] and in *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Volume* 1. In the lectures, Wittgenstein states:

> Consider the James-Lange theory of emotions, say of depression; the theory says that these states of the soul are feelings, not localized, and "diffused". (It also said "He is sad because he cries." And this is good, but *not* if taken as "Part of his sadness is the feeling that he cries" – it's good if taken as "part of his sadness is that he cries.") People want to make depression, joy, hope, into 'sensations': the paradigm was the atomic sensation; this physics-color model dominated them. So hope, e.g. was "a sum of feelings."
>
> That is odd. When depressed do I get depressed feelings in parts of my body? My concept 'bodily feeling' and my concept 'grief' are totally different. Where do you feel it? One says, in my soul.

It is not, Wittgenstein continues, that pain is localized and depression not. Depression is not the sort of thing – as a sensation is – that could be localized, although its criteria include behavior. Wittgenstein stated: "James thought he must make that comparison; he thought he must take pain and depression as two experiences. But the concepts needn't be comparable" (L, 281–2).

Wittgenstein still finds something "good" in the James–Lange theory that "he is sad because he cries." He praises James's portrayal of a tight connection between the behavior and the sadness, as he did more than a decade earlier, but he now finds that James misses the nature of the connection, which is neither causal nor compositional (that of part to whole) but "criterial," "logical," or "grammatical."[34] Crying, a criterion of sadness, is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of sadness – one may cry and not really be sad, or be sad and not cry – but it is nevertheless "logically" or "grammatically" related to sadness.[35] The concept of sadness "takes" in a context that includes the natural human propensity to cry in certain unhappy situations.

At the beginning of the passage previously cited, Wittgenstein claims that although it is good to say, along with James and Lange, that "he is sad because he cries," it is not good if taken to mean that "[p]art of his sadness is the feeling that he cries." As the succeeding paragraphs make clear, Wittgenstein rejects a "composition" view of sadness, according to which sadness is *composed* of certain feelings, including those of crying. That view owes too much to certain scientific models: "the paradigm was the atomic sensation; this physics-color model dominated them." James was misled by this model into thinking that sadness had elements or parts in the way that water or white light do.

However, another way of taking James's theory is said by Wittgenstein to be "good," namely: "part of his sadness is that he cries." What then is the difference between *a feeling* being part of his sadness and *that he cries* being a part of his sadness? The latter is a logical or grammatical relationship between a fact and a concept; the former resembles a chemical or physical relationship, something taking place within the stream of thought. Although James rejected the empiricist psychology of discrete sensational units or ideas, he still thought of emotion and other psychological states as confirmable by a careful scrutiny of one's experience. This is the presupposition Wittgenstein continues to attack.

Wittgenstein returns to the James–Lange theory of the emotions in *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol. 1*, the typescript of 1947–8 in which he mentions James more than any other writer. As in the lectures of the previous year, he credits James's appreciation of the tight connection between body and emotion, and again criticizes quasi-scientific or empiricist understandings of that connection. The following remarks, incorporating Wittgenstein's citation of James on the emotions at section 451 of *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, begins – just as James's chapter on the emotions does – with a discussion of grief; but it includes Wittgenstein's suspicions of the idea that we *feel* our emotions:

"Where do you feel grief?" – In my mind. – And if I had to give a place here, I should point in the region of the stomach. For love, to the breast and for a flash of thought, to the head (RPP, 438).

But doesn't grief consist of all sorts of feelings? Is it not a congeries of feelings? Then would one say it consists of feelings A, B, C, etc. – like granite out of feldspar, mica and quartz? (RPP, 448).

But grief is a mental experience. One says that one experiences grief, joy, disappointment. And then these experiences seem to be really composite and distributed over the whole body.

The gasp of joy, laughter, jubilation, the thoughts of happiness – is not the experience of all this: joy? Do I know, then, that he is joyful because he tells me he feels his laughter, feels and hears his jubilation etc. – or because he laughs and is jubilant? Do *I* say "I am happy" because I feel all that? (RPP, 449).

And how does it come about that – as James says – I have a feeling of joy if I merely make a joyful face; a feeling of sadness, if I make a sad one? That, therefore, I can produce these feelings by imitating their expression? Does that shew that muscular sensations are sadness, or part of sadness? (RPP, 451).

Suppose I say: "Yes, it's true: if I adopt a more friendly expression, I feel better at once." – Is that because the feelings in the face are pleasanter? or because adopting this expression has consequences? (One says "Chin up!") (RPP, 453).

Now granted – although it is extremely doubtful – that the muscular feeling of a smile is a constituent part of feeling glad; – where are the other components? Well, in the breast and belly etc.! – But do you really feel them, or do you merely conclude that they *must* be there? Are you really conscious of these localized feelings? – And if not – why are they supposed to be there at all? Why are you supposed to mean *them*, when you say you feel happy? (RPP, 456).

Something that could only be established through an act of *looking* – that's at any rate not what you meant.

For "sorrow," "joy," etc. just are not used like that (RPP, 457).

I have cited a long section of Wittgenstein's typescript in order to get a sense both of his therapeutic method at work on a topic also discussed by James, and of the naturalness with which James's name is introduced into the discussion. Wittgenstein's remarks run both along with, and against, James.

There is, throughout the passage, his basic criticism that James assimilates "logic" to introspective science – "something that could only be established through an act of *looking*" (RPP, 457). At section 448 in *Remarks*, Wittgenstein discusses the "composition" view of emotion mentioned in the lectures of the previous year. Is grief a "congeries of feelings," as granite is a conglomeration of "feldspar, mica, and quartz"? The implied answer is "no"; but Wittgenstein acknowledges at section 449 in *Remarks* that grief "is a mental experience," and that it does (at times?) "seem to be really composite and distributed over the whole body." It "seems" composite and distributed, then, but when we say "I'm grief-stricken" or "I'm really happy today," we are not, Wittgenstein insists, reporting on such feelings (as we would be if we reported widespread muscle aches caused by the flu).

Wittgenstein, like James, wishes to acknowledge the importance of the body. We don't feel grief in a portion of our body; but all the same, "we do point to our body as if the grief were in it." And we point to the breast for love and to the head as the place of thought (RPP, 438). Why do we do so? Not necessarily because we "feel a physical discomfort." Why then? Wittgenstein offers a self-effacing answer: "I do not know the cause" (RPP, 439). This is a moment when Wittgenstein follows his announced method of offering "description" rather than "explanation." Notice that he does *not* say we are wrong to behave in these ways. Indeed, earlier in his typescript, as if trying to give the locations of emotions their proper due, he had written:

> Is it not important that for me hope lives in the *breast*? Isn't this a picture of one or another important bit of human behavior? Why does a human being *believe* a thought comes into his head? Or, more correctly, he does not believe it; he lives it. For he clutches at his head; he shuts his eyes in order to be alone with himself in his head. He tilts his head back and makes a movement as a sign that nothing should disturb the process in the head. – Now are these not important kinds of behavior? (RPP, 278).

James agrees with Wittgenstein about the importance of these kinds of behavior, and Wittgenstein agrees with James at section 451

in *Remarks,* that "I can produce these feelings by imitating their expression." James had written:

> Everyone knows how panic is increased by flight, and how the giving way to the symptoms of grief or anger increases these passions themselves. . . . In rage, it is notorious how we 'work ourselves up' to a climax by repeated outbreaks of expression. . . . Whistling to keep up courage is no mere figure of speech . . . (PP, 1077–8).

Exploring this position of James's, Wittgenstein adds another example at section 451 in *Remarks,* the German expression "Kopf hoch!" – translated as "Chin up!" (RPP, 453). In all these cases, a posture or formation of the body plays a role in producing a certain feeling. But the bodily expression alone is not sufficient to produce the feeling, and one cannot in any mechanical way make oneself happy, for example, just by smiling: "Does one say: "Now I feel much better: the feeling in my facial muscles and round about the corners of my mouth is good"? (RPP, 454). It is not these sensations that are happy or pleasant. But James knows this as well as Wittgenstein, for he writes: "An actor can perfectly simulate an emotion and yet be inwardly cold; and we can all pretend to cry and not feel grief; and feign laughter without being amused" (PP, 1077).

In his postwar lectures, Wittgenstein clarifies both his conception of his own method, and his negative evaluation of James's theory. Asked about the nature of philosophical problems, Wittgenstein states:

> A philosophical problem arises when we are in a muddle, the first mistake is to ask the question.
>
> Take the James-Lange theory that the emotions are diffuse bodily sensations. . . . Philosophy could be taught (cf. Plato) just by asking the right questions so as to remind you – to remind you of what? In this case, that a man does not say "I'm depressed" on the basis of observed bodily feelings.
>
> There is a difficulty about getting out in the open. "It's *got* to be that way" (L, 45).

Good as he was at diagnosing the compulsions of other philosophers, Wittgenstein thought, James had his own deep-seated compulsions or apparent necessities, among them the idea that emotions must be composed of experiences. In remaining wedded to experience as his basic category, James persists in a fundamentally empiricist line that, for Wittgenstein, is a source of transcendental illusion. Still,

Wittgenstein does not here acknowledge the confluence between his and James's views.

In considering their approaches to issues of self-identity and the nature of mental states, a wide rift between James and Wittgenstein becomes apparent. Although both oppose the picture of a self-enclosed, Cartesian self, both emphasize the body, and both "distribute the self" across the human life-world, James finds the self in a set of experiences – our *feelings* about our children, or of our bodies; whereas Wittgenstein offers a *logical* view of the self, according to which the self occupies a position in a conceptual framework. Wittgenstein offers substantial criticisms of James, but he nevertheless drew ideas from him that he found worth working with and against, as he labored to make sense of the notion that hope lies in the breast, thought in the head, and grief in the demeanor of the body. James, in short, helped Wittgenstein understand some ways in which "the human body is the best picture of the human soul" (PI, p. 178).

5

Language and Meaning

"What am I after? The fact that the description of the use of a word is the description of a system, or of systems. – But I don't have a definition for what a system is." – Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol.* 1[1]

"So is the experience of meaning a fancy? Well, even if it is a fancy, that does not make the experience of this fancy any *less* interesting" (RPP, 355).

Wittgenstein's criticisms of James on language – particularly in *Philosophical Investigations* – are easy to spot, but the pervasive overlap of themes, examples, and methods there and in other work is less obvious. Wittgenstein criticizes James (among others) for confusing meanings with feelings, and for the credulity he exhibits in his discussion of a Mr. Ballard, a deaf mute who claimed to have been able to think before he could speak. Wittgenstein also considers, again in a critical spirit, James's discussion of a word on the tip of one's tongue, concluding that James thinks of it as a peculiar experience, when it is really "not experience at all" (PI, p. 219).

Many of Wittgenstein's criticisms of James are of a piece with those he makes of the "if-feeling," which we considered in Chapter 3. Wittgenstein charges James with a fundamental failure to distinguish experience from "grammar," "meaning," or "logic."[2] For all his recognition of the importance of context, for example, James always saw context as psychological, something one could experience at a

moment in the stream of thought. Whereas for Wittgenstein, contexts lie in institutions and practices, which are not items within a momentary experience. It was obvious for James to search for meaning among the specific feelings accompanying the use of such words as "and" and "or" – but this obvious first step was "the one that altogether escapes notice" (PI, 308). Yet if Wittgenstein studied James making such missteps he also, from his earliest study of James's *Principles,* confronted ideas and examples that he used in his writings, whose significance he was still pondering in the late 1940s. For example, there is James's idea that words have souls as well as bodies (PP, 726), to which Wittgenstein alludes as early as the *Philosophical Grammar* of 1932–4: "It may be that if it is to achieve its effect a particular word cannot be replaced by any other; just as it may be that a gesture cannot be replaced by any other. (The word has a soul and not just a meaning.)"[3] These intertwined ideas of gestures, souls of words, and words that can't be replaced or translated are, we shall see, major themes of the later sections of the *Philosophical Investigation*s, a work that in this case as in others, proceeds with the assistance, and not just on the wreakage of the theories of William James.

1

The Brown Book, like the *Investigations,* opens with a discussion of St. Augustine; but, unlike the *Investigations,* it mentions William James on its second page. Wittgenstein introduces the idea of a language whose function is to communicate between a builder, A, and a helper, B:

> The language consists of the words "cube," "brick," "slab," "column." A calls out one of these words, upon which B brings a stone of a certain shape. Let us imagine a society in which this is the only system of language. The child learns this language from the grown-ups by being trained to its use. I am using the word "trained" in a way strictly analogous to that in which we talk of an animal being trained to do certain things. It is done by means of example, reward, punishment, and such like (BB, 77).

The language has only four words, and the expression "brick" functions as our English "Bring me a brick." Can we say, Wittgenstein asks, that these two expressions are synonymous? And can we say that when a man gives the order in English, he means it as four words, or just as

one "composite word"? To these questions, Wittgenstein suggests the following answer: "He *means* all four words if in his language he uses that sentence in contrast with other sentences in which these words are used. . . ." For this contrast to exist he need not be *thinking* of the contrast: "All that is really relevant is that these contrasts should exist in the system of language which he is using, and . . . they need not in any sense be present in his mind when he utters his sentence." The original question ("must he mean it as four words") seemed to be "about the state of mind of the man who says the sentence, whereas the idea of meaning which we arrived at in the end was not that of a state of mind." The distinction between contrasts existing in the system of language and in the state of mind of someone who utters a sentence is a version of Wittgenstein's fundamental distinction between meaning and experience. This is the context in which James is mentioned:

> William James speaks of specific feelings accompanying the use of such words as "and", "if", "or". And there is no doubt that at least certain gestures are often connected with such words, as a collecting gesture with "and", and a dismissing gesture with "not". And there obviously are visual and muscular sensations connected with these gestures. On the other hand it is clear enough that these sensations do not accompany every use of the word "not" and "and". . . . Ask yourself: "When I said, 'Give me an apple *and* a pear, *and* leave the room', had I the same feeling when I pronounced the two words 'and'?" (BB, 78–9).

Wittgenstein actually concedes something to James that he would no longer concede in the *Investigations*: that we may think of "the meaning of signs" in two ways: "sometimes as states of mind of the man using them, sometimes as the role which these signs are playing in the system of language" (BB, 78). Nevertheless, Wittgenstein's point against James is that he fails to distinguish these two senses of "meaning," one psychological and one, as Wittgenstein will come to say, "grammatical." It is this grammatical conception of meaning that comes to prominence in the first part of the *Investigations*.

As we have seen, Wittgenstein praises James for discovering, or noticing, "the absence of the act of volition,"[4] and he utilizes James's case of "getting out of bed" in *The Brown Book* to show a layer of ordinary voluntary action in which there are no such acts. In the passage late in *The Brown Book* to which we will now turn, Wittgenstein applies the lesson of James's case in a discussion of language.

Wittgenstein is renewing consideration of the feelings associated with words. "I might be inclined," he writes, "to reflect and say to myself, "didn't I have a sort of homely feeling when I took in the word 'tree'?" He immediately raises the objection he had raised on the second page of *The Brown Book*: "do I always have this feeling . . . when I hear that word used or use it myself . . . .?" (BB, 156). When we use the phrase "understanding a word," Wittgenstein continues, we don't necessarily refer

> to what which happens while we are saying or hearing it, but to the whole environment of the event of saying it. . . . Speaking with understanding certainly differs from speaking like an automaton, but this doesn't mean that the speaking in the first case is all the time accompanied by something which is lacking in the second case. Thus also, acting voluntarily (or involuntarily) is, in many cases, characterized as such by a multitude of circumstances under which the action takes place rather than by an experience which we should call characteristic of voluntary action. And in this sense it is true to say that what happened when I got out of bed – when I should certainly not call it involuntary – was that I found myself getting up. Or rather, this is a possible case; for of course every day something different happens (BB, 157).

Wittgenstein applies the lesson of James's "getting out of bed" case to language: there need not be an act or experience of understanding in order for one to understand, any more than there need be an act of intention when one does something intentionally, such as getting out of bed. We again see Wittgenstein working *with*, rather than against, James: stressing not only "the absence of the will act," and the sheer variety of cases constituting intentional action, but the importance of surroundings or environment in such cases. Yet, Wittgenstein sees these surroundings as logical or grammatical, rather than psychological. For James, the surroundings are discernible elements or features of experience, whereas for Wittgenstein they are necessary conditions: without the rules of chess, one can't intend to play chess, and without the established usage of the word "tree" there is nothing for us to understand when we hear or say the word "tree."

2

Further complicating the relationship between James and Wittgenstein here, James shows a grasp of the point that one can understand

language without separate acts of understanding in a passage from his great chapter on "The Stream of Thought." We can infer that Wittgenstein read this passage, for it lies on the very page of *The Principles* where James begins his discussion of the deaf mute Ballard, cited in section 342 of *Investigations.* James writes:

> An exceptionally intelligent friend informs me that he can frame no image whatever of the appearance of his breakfast-table. When asked how he then remembers it at all, he says he simply '*knows*' that it seated four people, and was covered with a white cloth on which were a butter-dish, a coffee-pot, radishes, and so forth. The mind-stuff of which this 'knowing' is made seems to be verbal images exclusively. But if the words 'coffee,' 'bacon,' 'muffins,' and 'eggs' lead a man to speak to his cook, to pay his bills, and to take measures for the morrow's meal exactly as visual and gustatory memories would, why are they not, for all practical intents and purposes, as good a kind of material in which to think? (PP, 256).

James seems to assume that thinking, or knowing, must consist in images of some kind, whether mental or "verbal." This is a conclusion, or presupposition, that Wittgenstein resists. Yet James's main point is that mental images are not necessary for thinking or knowing. His talk about words in the last sentence doesn't mention images at all: the *words* are material in which to think. James uses the case of his "exceptionally intelligent friend" as a way of resisting the urge to say that there must have been an unconscious "spiritual" knowing or thinking behind someone's ability to say what the table was like.

Language, as James depicts it in the last sentence, is something we put to work in the activities of daily life – to pay our bills or procure our food. There is thus an incipient pragmatism in James's statement, which fits hand in glove with Wittgenstein's suggestion that "the meaning of a word is its use in the language" (PI, 43), and his comparison of language to a set of tools (PI, 11). Yet James does not – as Wittgenstein does – think of the uses of words as constituting the *meanings* of those words. In fact, James is not particularly interested in what constitutes linguistic meaning, which is of course a central question for Wittgenstein. Nevertheless, when James states that language may furnish "material in which to think" he anticipates *exactly* Wittgenstein's point in section 329 of the *Investigations*: "When I think in language, there aren't 'meanings' going through my mind in

addition to the verbal expressions: the language is itself the vehicle of thought" (PI, 329).

James's remark about his intelligent friend appears on the same page of *The Principles of Psychology* as the Ballard case.[5] Why are they conjoined in James's discussion? James's point is that thought may occur in many media – specifically in words (in the case of his "intelligent friend") and without words at all (in the case of Mr. Ballard). Wittgenstein accepts the first point, but is suspicious of the second, yet he only mentions James in connection with the latter.

The two points connected by James are separated in the *Investigations* by a distance of twelve numbered paragraphs. For the remainder of this section, I shall travel this distance, along Wittgenstein's path from sections 329 to 342 in the *Investigations.* In the following section, I shall then consider James's remarks in *their* context, the twenty-page section of the "The Stream of Thought" that begins with the "if-feeling" and ends with the Ballard case (PP, 238–60).

Wittgenstein's remark in section 329 begins with the word "when." He is not claiming that all thinking takes place in language, just that some does. In Section 335, he considers a different set of cases, in which the words for our thought don't just come, as they do for James's friend. Sometimes, we need to make an effort to get the right words to come, if we are writing a difficult letter, for example. And the idea that we search for "the right expression for our thoughts" suggests that the thoughts are somehow already there, ready to be transcribed or translated into language. Such a picture, Wittgenstein maintains, fits some cases better than others, for there is a variety of cases here, where "all sorts of things" may happen. For example:

> I surrender to a mood and the expression *comes.* Or a picture occurs to me and I try to hit on the corresponding German one. Or I make a gesture, and ask myself: What words correspond to this gesture? And so on.
>
> Now if it were asked: "Do you have the thought before finding the expression?" what would one have to reply? And what, to the question: "What did the thought consist in, as it existed before its expression? (PI, 335).

How could James respond to the questions with which Wittgenstein ends? On the basis of his friend whose knowledge consists in "verbal images exclusively," James can maintain that there need be no separate thought that is then translated into verbal expression. Indeed, in "The

Stream of Thought" he quotes Joseph Joubert and Victor Egger to this effect: "'We only know just what we meant to say, after we have said it'"; "Before speaking, one barely knows what one intends to say, but afterwards one is filled with admiration and surprise at having said and thought it so well'" (PP, 270). Rather than positing a "necessary" act of thought which is then expressed, James takes the position he had taken about will: there need not be an act of thought before speaking, any more than there need be an act of will before we get out of bed in the morning. James would have found Wittgenstein's emphasis on the variety of cases congenial, just as Wittgenstein's list of "all sorts of things" could have found a happy home in James's *Principles*. In short, although Wittgenstein criticizes James in section 342 of the *Investigations*, he is working along Jamesian lines in such preceding sections as 329 and 335.

Passing from the discussion of finding the right expression to the claim that "thinking is not an incorporeal process which lends life and sense to speaking" (PI, 339), Wittgenstein arrives, just before the introduction of the name of William James at the beginning of section 342, at the one-sentence section 341: "Speech with and without thought is to be compared with the playing of a piece of music with and without thought" (PI, 341). Thoughtful playing is not a matter of some private exhibition accompanying the movements of the hands, but of how the publicly accessible music is actually played, a point Wittgenstein applies to language. The whole notion of "thought" that might or might not accompany speech is suspicious. This, then, is the immediate context in which James is first mentioned in the *Investigations*:

> William James, in order to show that thought is possible without speech, quotes the recollection of a deaf-mute, Mr. Ballard, who wrote that in his early youth, even before he could speak, he had had thoughts about God and the world. – What can he have meant?" – Ballard writes: "It was during those delightful rides, some two or three years before my initiation into the rudiments of written language, that I began to ask myself the question: how came the world into being?" (PI, 342).

Whereas James writes that the Ballard case shows that it is "perfectly possible" for there to be "thought without language" (PP, 257, 256), Wittgenstein concludes in his characteristically skeptical manner: "These recollections are a queer memory phenomenon, – and I

do not know what conclusions one can draw from them about the past of the man who recounts them." In his postwar lectures, Wittgenstein does draw a conclusion: the case "is correctly described as 'it seemed to [Ballard] later that . . . he had asked the question.'" It is "not an *example* of thinking without speaking" (L, 285). In the *Investigations* Wittgenstein pushes us to see this point by asking: "Are you sure . . . that this is the correct translation of your wordless thought into words? And why does this question – which otherwise seems not to exist – raise its head here?" Wittgenstein's point can be illustrated by imagining that, in response to your saying that you'd like to see *Chinatown* again, a friend says: "Are you sure you've given the correct translation of your wordless thought into words?" The question seems entirely out of place. What sort of person, in what sort of situation, would be in serious doubt about whether someone else has adequately rendered his own thought into speech? In the ordinary situation that I have imagined, the question "seems not to exist," and it is such "ordinary" uses of language to which Wittgenstein draws our attention in the course of his philosophical therapy.

Wittgenstein does not want to deny, however, that there are real questions that sound similar to this one. We ask people whether they really mean what they say as a way of getting them to reconsider, or to take full responsibility, for some position or attitude. Wittgenstein describes such a case: "When you were swearing just now, did you really mean it?" Such a question, as Wittgenstein remarks later in the *Investigations*, "is perhaps as much as to say: 'Were you really angry?' – And the answer may be given as a result of introspection and is often some such thing as: 'I didn't mean it very seriously, 'I meant it half jokingly' and so on" (PI, 677).

In this case as in others, Wittgenstein's "ordinary language philosophy" calls attention to uses of language that any speaker can judge to make sense. And it examines other uses of language – those produced by Ballard and endorsed by James, for example – that seem suspect, or as Wittgenstein says a few paragraphs after introducing Ballard, "fishy":

> "These deaf-mutes have learned only a gesture-language, but each of them talks to himself inwardly in a vocal language." – Now, don't you understand that? – But how do I know whether I understand it?! – What can I do with this information (if it is such)? The whole idea of understanding smells fishy here.

> I do not know whether I am to say I understand it or don't understand it. I might answer "It's an English sentence; *apparently* quite in order – that is, until one wants to do something with it; it has a connection with other sentences which makes it difficult for us to say that nobody really knows what it tells us; but everyone who has not become calloused by doing philosophy notices that there is something wrong here (PI, 348).

This again is a claim about ordinary language, and a defense of ordinary language against philosophy – here in the person of William James. If the sentence "each of them talks to himself inwardly in a vocal language" seems to make sense, this is because James is subject to a "grammatical illusion" (cf. PI, 110).

Strangely enough, there is an obvious objection to James that Wittgenstein does not make: the Ballard case does not support James's claim that thought is possible without language because Ballard already *has* language. Ballard writes: "I could convey my thoughts and feelings to my parents and brothers by natural signs or pantomime, and I could understand what they said to me by the same medium" (PP, 257). Ballard's mother, he writes, "once told me about a being up above, pointing her finger towards the sky and with a solemn look on her countenance." One stormy day in a field he "asked" one of his brothers where the claps of thunder (which Ballard could feel) came from, whereupon "he pointed to the sky and made a zigzag motion with his finger, signifying lightning" (PP, 259). Ballard speaks.

Wittgenstein's critique is directed at a picture of thought as entirely divorced from behavior, including verbal behavior. Despite its difficulties, this picture remains a permanent temptation, even for someone like James who provides so many examples of thought in, rather than separate from, language.

3

James's discussion of Ballard, his claim that words are "material in which to think," and his remark that each word in a sentence "is felt, not only as a word, but as having a *meaning*" occur in a subsection of "The Stream of Thought" entitled "Feelings of Tendency." A congeries of the interesting and the objectionable, this was one of those fascinating and frustrating portions of James's *Principles* about which Wittgenstein wrote in *Philosophical Grammar*, *The Brown Book*, *Eine*

Philosophische Betrachtung, and *Philosophical Investigations*, and to which he returned in the 1940s. Indeed, Wittgenstein returns to this section of "The Stream of Thought" within the very pages of the *Investigations*, for he discusses it in Part 1 and again in Part 2. Just two pages of Part 2 (218–19) incorporate three topics from these pages of James: the idea that meaning is a process accompanying words; the idea – which Wittgenstein explicitly attributes to James – that a word on the tip of one's tongue is a peculiar kind of experience; and the idea that a word has a familiar physiognomy, giving us "the feeling that it has taken up its meaning into itself. . . ." (PI, p. 218). We shall turn to these pages in section 4, after considering James's statements in their original context.

As we discussed in Chapter 3, James modifies British empiricism in *The Principles of Psychology* by shifting the terms of his analysis of consciousness from discrete and repeatable "ideas" to a "stream of thought." In the stream, different thoughts, just like different waters, blend; and no water is identical with another:

> . . . the definite images of traditional psychology form but the very smallest part of our minds as they actually live. The traditional psychology talks like one who should say a river consists of nothing but pailsful, spoonsful, quartpotsful, barrelsful, and other moulded forms of water. Even were the pails and the pots all actually standing in the stream, still between them the free water would continue to flow. It is just this free water of consciousness that psychologists resolutely overlook. Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. With it goes the sense of its relations, near and remote, the dying echo of whence it came to us, the dawning sense of whither it is to lead (PP, 246).

If the empiricists miss these features of our experience altogether, James finds that the "intellectualists" – among whom he includes Hegel and T. H. Green – register the "*cognitive function*" of these features, but deny "that anything in the way of *feeling* has a share in bringing it about" (PP, 241–2).

Among the features of experience missed by both the intellectualists and the empiricists are what James calls "feelings of tendency," which James illustrates by our alleged reactions to three commands: "Wait!", "Hark!", and "Look!" Citing no experimental evidence, James nevertheless maintains that each of the three commands induces a specific attitude of "expectancy, . . . a sense of the direction from which

an impression is about to come, although no positive impression is yet there. Meanwhile we have no names for the psychoses in question but the names hark, look, and wait" (PP, 243). James here presents himself as finding *more* in experience than traditional empiricism allows for, and as noting the inadequacy of language to register the individuality of each contingent, anticipatory portion of the stream of thought.

James next considers trying to recall a forgotten name. Like the three attitudes associated with the exclamations 'Wait'! 'Hark!' and 'Look!', each case of trying to recall a forgotten name feels a certain way – it is a definite portion of the stream of thought: "When I vainly try to recall the name of Spalding, my consciousness is far removed from what it is when I vainly try to recall the name of Bowles." When we try to remember a forgotten name, then, there is "a gap" in our consciousness, but it is like no other gap:

> A sort of wraith of the name is in it, beckoning us in a given direction, making us at moments tingle with the sense of our closeness, and then letting us sink back without the longed-for term. If wrong names are proposed to us, this singularly definite gap acts immediately so as to negate them. They do not fit into its mould. And the gap of one word does not feel like the gap of another, all empty of content as both might seem necessarily to be when described as gaps. . . . The rhythm of a lost word may be there without a sound to clothe it. . . . Everyone must know the tantalizing effect of the blank rhythm of some forgotten verse, restlessly dancing in one's mind, striving to be filled out with words (PP, 243–4).

These remarks about searching for and finding the right word, and about the rhythm of poetry, concern our life with language, as manifested in the stream of thought. James is not – as Wittgenstein wants to do – talking about language as such, but first and foremost about our experience of language, as of everything else. James's idea that the "gap" of one word "does not feel like the gap of another" coheres with, though it does not amount to the claim that, the meaning of a word is a particular sort of feeling.

James finds that there are subtle, transitory phenomena, for which we have "an acutely discriminative sense" (PP, 244). They are, however, only "glimpsed . . . in flight," never held still. If stopped or frozen, their "feeling of direction" (PP, 245) – their life, one might say – is lost: "large tracts of human speech are nothing but signs of direction in thought, of which direction we nevertheless have an acutely discriminative sense,

though no definite sensorial image plays any part in it whatsoever (PP, 244). This is one of those places where James seems to think that meaning is a subtle process, something we experience. James does not say that the "directions in thought" are the meanings of human speech, yet the claim that large tracts of speech are "nothing but signs" of such directions seems to leave nothing else for meaning to be. A later statement comes even closer to asserting that meanings are experiences, and to what Wittgenstein calls a "private language":[6]

> *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 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,' . . . (PP, 446).

Faced with such statements, Wittgenstein tries to lead us home to our ordinary language: " 'Tell me, what was going on in you when you uttered the words. . . . ?' – The answer to this is not: 'I was meaning . . . !' " (PI, 675). Meaning is not, Wittgenstein insists, a kind of experience.

Now among the items of speech James mentions as "signs of direction in thought" are exclamations indicating that we have grasped someone's meaning, that "we get it." When we first get someone's meaning, we experience "an altogether specific affection of our mind," and James estimates that "a good third of our psychic life consists in these rapid premonitory perspective views of schemes of thought not yet articulate" (PP, 245). This is another place where James takes the step that escapes notice – here the step of thinking that grasping meaning must be a "specific affection of our mind." Yet James's question – what is it to suddenly grasp someone's meaning? – stays with Wittgenstein for the entire period of his later philosophy. James's book kept problems alive for Wittgenstein.

We feel the affinities, James continues, not only between our "gaps" and certain words, and between our "premonitory views" and subsequently articulated schemes of thought, but between one word and another. Each word in a stream of English or French is a "sign of direction in thought": "Our understanding of a French sentence heard never falls to so low an ebb that we are not aware that the words linguistically

belong together. Our attention can hardly so wander that if an English word be suddenly introduced we shall not start at the change." If words belong to the same language and vocabulary, and if the sentences in which they are placed are grammatically correct, the language sounds just like "sense," even though it may not be: "Sentences with absolutely no meaning may be uttered in good faith and pass unchallenged" (PP, 253). James cites as examples the language of "prayer-meetings," "newspaper-reporter's flourishes," pseudo-scientific explanations, and

> the obscurer passages in Hegel [about which] it is a fair question whether the rationality included in them be anything more than the fact that the words all belong to a common vocabulary, and are strung together on a scheme of predication and relation, – immediacy, self-relation, and what not, – which has habitually recurred. Yet there seems no reason to doubt that the subjective feeling of the rationality of these sentences was strong in the writer as he penned them, or even that some readers by straining may have reproduced it in themselves (PP, 254–5).

James's fundamental claim that consciousness is as much feeling as thought is here put to work in his account of rationality, a subject he had first broached in his paper of 1879–80, "The Sentiment of Rationality."[7] James does not say either here or in that paper that the sentiment *is* the rationality, nor that it is an infallible indicator of rationality. Indeed his portrayal of Hegel's views makes it clear that "the subjective feeling of the rationality" is compatible with hearing or writing a sentence that has "absolutely no meaning."

Pausing to summarize toward the end of the "Feelings of Tendency" section, James writes that the feelings of smooth transitions in language "stand for a good part of our impression that a sentence has a meaning." He distinguishes between this "dynamic meaning," a "bare fringe . . . of felt suitability or unfitness to the context and conclusion," and the "static" meaning of a word, consisting either of "sensory images" or "other words aroused." In these dynamic and static ways, each word "is felt, not only as a word, but as having a *meaning*" (PP, 255). James here anticipates his bifurcated account of meaning in *Pragmatism* and later works. As Richard Gale argues, James offers two empiricist theories of meaning, "content empiricism" and "operationalist or pragmatic empiricism." According to the former

the meaning of an idea consists in "sensory or experiential contents," whereas according to the latter meaning it "is a set of conditionalized predictions stating what experiences would be had in the future upon performing certain actions. . . ."[8] James's notion of "dynamic meaning" in the *Principles* is an ancestor of the "pragmatic" meaning of *Varieties*, *Pragmatism*, and later works. But neither predictions about experiences, nor experiences themselves, can constitute the normative notion of a rule, or the culturally established systems of significance Wittgenstein describes. In this respect, as Gale points out, James stands opposed to his pragmatist contemporary Charles Sanders Peirce, who found the source of the normative in the agreement of "the community of scientists." As against Peirce, "James eschews any appeal to normatively rule-governed human practices to explain the normative."[9]

Still, it is important to see that in the *Principles*, as in his later work, James offers not one, but two, accounts of meaning, one anticipating his later pragmatic theory. The dynamic meaning consists of more than "felt suitability," more than an impression that a sentence has a meaning, a point that emerges as James criticizes Hegel's claim that "pure being is identical with pure nothing." Taken "statically, or without the fringe they wear in a context," the phrases "pure being" and "pure nothing" are alike in awakening no sensory images. "But taken dynamically, or as significant, – as *thought*, – their fringes of relation, their affinities and repugnances, their function and meaning, are felt and understood to be absolutely opposed" (PP, 256).

In the previous paragraph, where James introduced the distinction between static and dynamic meaning, the static meaning played the more important role. The dynamic meaning furnished only the "impression" of meaning, but the static meaning consists of definitions and definite images. Here, the dynamic meaning comes to the fore: taking words dynamically – understanding and feeling their "fringes" and "affinities" – makes them "thought." When taken dynamically, Hegel's "celebrated dictum" that pure being is identical with pure nothing becomes something similar to a contradiction, rather than an apparently deep identity.

James's pairing of "function and meaning" in the last sentence of the previously cited passage is particularly suggestive in light of

Wittgenstein's statement that "for a *large* class of cases" we can define the meaning of a word as its "use in the language" (PI, 43). What does James mean by function, however? In the following paragraph, he introduces the case we considered in section 1: that of his "exceptionally intelligent friend." We can now see that James's point concerns "dynamic meaning": if "the words 'coffee,' 'bacon,' 'muffins' . . . lead a man to speak to his cook, to pay his bills, and to take measures for the morrow's meal," they are "material in which to think." The dynamical meaning of these words consists in the transitions or leadings from their utterance to certain actions and results. In these cases, language is at work not only in the stream of thought but in the stream of life. It is a matter, as James says, of "practical intents and purposes" – getting the eggs cooked or paying bills – or, as in Wittgenstein's *Investigations*, of constructing a building, giving orders, or solving a problem in practical arithmetic. In *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, written during a time when he was rereading James's *Principles*, Wittgenstein wrote: "The application and further interpretation of words flows on and only in this current does a word have its meaning" (RPP, 240). Wittgenstein here applies James's stream of thought metaphor to meaning, in a way that James suggests.

Yet if the current is stilled, the dynamic meaning disappears. The processes James calls dynamic or dynamical meaning spread from the stream of thought into the world generally, as one pays the bills or speaks to the cook; but they of course fade out when the person engaged in them turns her interest to something else. For Wittgenstein, in contrast, meaning is not the sort of thing that *occurs*: no one has to be using a word or sentence now for it to have meaning. James sees language as a set of leadings or transitions – to use a term of J. L. Austin's, as a set of perlocutionary acts, defined in terms of their effects. Wittgenstein, in contrast, sees not only the perlocutionary but the illocutionary acts we perform with language, which allows him to note the differences among such rule-governed acts as promising, hinting, advising, and stating.[10] The difference between merely hinting and actually stating something is a matter not of the effects to which such an act leads (the difference would be there even if no one is listening), but of the act itself, an act formed by its place in the web of "language and the actions into which it is woven" (PI, 7).

Before turning to Wittgenstein's discussions in *Investigations* Part 2, it will be helpful to consider another relevant passage from *The Principles of Psychology*, from the chapter on "The Perception of 'Things'." Perception differs from sensation, James writes, "by the consciousness of farther facts associated with the object of the sensation" (PP, 723).[11] James presents himself as an empiricist in citing, as sources for this distinction, such writers as James Mill, George Berkeley, and Thomas Reid (PP, 723–4). According to these writers, our perception of the world is a blend of sensational and other elements. However, as is frequently the case, James criticizes traditional empiricism. He warns against treating "the perception as a sum of distinct psychic entities," for this would be to overlook the fundamental unity of the stream of thought (PP, 725).

James now applies this distinction between sensation and perception to our experience of language – both to the familiar feel of one's own language,[12] and to shifts in our experience of language. Consider, for example, the words: "*Pas de lieu Rhône que nous*," about which James comments that

> one may read this over and over again without recognizing the sounds to be identical with those of the words *paddle your own canoe*. As we seize the English meaning the sound itself appears to change. . . . one may often surprise a change in the very *feel* of the word. Our own language would sound very different to us if we heard it without understanding, as we hear a foreign tongue. . . . This is probably the reason why, if we look at an isolated printed word and repeat it long enough, it ends by assuming an entirely unnatural aspect. Let the reader try this with any word on this page. He will soon begin to wonder if it can possibly be the word he has been using all his life with that meaning. It stares at him from the paper like a glass eye, with no speculation in it. Its body is indeed there, but its soul is fled (PP, 726).

These remarks on language seem to have left deposits in both parts of the *Investigations*: For in Part 1 Wittgenstein writes: "There might also be a language in whose use the 'soul' of the words played no part" (PI, 350). And in Part 2 he asks: "What would you be missing . . . if you did not feel that a word lost its meaning and became a mere sound if it was repeated ten times over?" (PI, p. 214). The second of these remarks occurs in section xi of *Investigations* Part 2, where music, aspect seeing, experiencing the meaning of words, and linguistic meaning are all under discussion. We are now prepared to consider Wittgenstein's treatment of these topics.

4

At the heart of Wittgenstein's discussion in section xi are two senses of understanding or meaning,[13] introduced toward the end of *Investigations* Part 1:

> We speak of understanding a sentence in the sense in which it can be replaced by another which says the same; but also in the sense in which it cannot be replaced by any other. (Any more than one musical theme can be replaced by another.)
>
> In the one case the thought in the sentence is something common to different sentences; in the other, something is expressed only by these words in these positions. (Understanding a poem) (PI, 531).
>
> Then has "understanding" two different meanings here? – I would rather say that these kinds of use of "understanding" make up its meaning, make up my *concept* of understanding.
>
> For I *want* to apply the word "understanding" to all this (PI, 532).

In the first use of "understand," one understands a sentence if one can translate it into, or replace it by, another. In school we are asked to produce a summary of a story or essay in our own words, and this is a way of showing that we understand it. But the second use of "understand" occurs in cases where one cannot show that one understands merely by translating or giving a *precis*; one who understands in this second way will know (and be able to show) something about just "these words in these positions."

Consider, as an example, William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," which begins:

> Five years have past; five summers, with the length
> Of five long winters! and again I hear
> These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
> With a soft inland murmur.

It is not hard to paraphrase these lines about a return to a landscape of mountains and waters after five years; anyone who could do so would understand the poem in the first use of "understand." Wittgenstein is interested, however, in a form of understanding manifested in responses to, rather than replacements of, particular words. He asks: "How does one *lead* anyone to comprehension of a poem or of a theme?" And he replies: "The answer to this question tells us

how meaning is explained here" (PI, 533). Someone might ask about Wordsworth's poem: "Do you feel a kind of restfulness as you read the line 'with a soft inland murmur?'"; would the restfulness be lost if "murmur" were replaced by "sound"? Or: "Why does the first line end with 'the length,' and how is the poem different if these words are transposed to the second line?" These are questions about "these words in these positions," and ways of considering meaning in Wittgenstein's second sense.

In a manuscript from 1945 or 1946, Wittgenstein gives a musical example of a request appropriate to his "second use" of "meaning." One says – to someone who plays all the notes but not in the right way – : "Play it as though it were an answer."[14] A descendent of this statement appears at section 527 of the *Investigations*, where Wittgenstein offers examples of how one might justify playing a piece of music with "just *this* pattern of variation of loudness and tempo": "One says, 'Don't you see, this is as if a conclusion were being drawn' . . ." (PI, 527). Meaning in music is explained by listening to and performing the music in a certain way, in acknowledgment of *these notes in these positions*. The first use of "understand" or "mean" applies to someone writing down notes that she hears, or transposing them into another key; and the second use applies to someone who can play them first as an answer, then as a question; first with animation, then with solemnity.

Wittgenstein was raised in a culture and a family permeated by classical music. Although he does not discuss music often in his philosophical publications, his notebooks are filled with remarks about music that connect with his philosophical thinking, for example: "The music of Bach resembles language more than does the music of Mozart & Haydn"; or "The temporality of the clock and temporality in music. They are not by any means equivalent concepts" (CV, 80). His friend Drury stated: "To watch Wittgenstein listening to music was to realize that this was something very central and deep in his life. He told me that this he could not express in his writings, and yet it was so important to him that he felt without it he was sure to be misunderstood."[15] Many of his remarks about music are related to the second use of "meaning" and "understanding" distinguished in section 531 of the *Investigations*. For example:

> You could play a minuet once and get a lot out of it, and play the same minuet another time and get nothing out of it. But it doesn't follow that what you get out of it is then independent of the minuet. Cf. the mistake of thinking that the meaning or thought is just an accompaniment of the word, and the word doesn't matter.[16]

Precisely these words, these notes, do matter. Again, there is "a certain *expression* proper to the appreciation of music, in listening, playing, and at other time too. . . . Someone who understands music will listen differently (e.g., with a different expression on his face), he will talk differently, from someone who does not" (CV, 70).

Complicating and deepening Wittgenstein's point about the second use of "understand" is his discovery that it applies not only to language and music, but to our experience of human beings:

> I say: "I can think of this face (which gives an impression of timidity) as courageous too." We do not mean by this that I can imagine someone with this face perhaps saving someone's life (that, of course, is imaginable in connection with any face). I am speaking rather of an aspect of the face itself. . . . The reinterpretation of a facial expression can be compared to the reinterpretation of a chord in music, when we hear it as a modulation first into this, then into that key (PI, 536).

According to Wittgenstein, "perception" or awareness or knowledge of people as people, awareness of language as meaningful, and our understanding of music, are related phenomena. Wittgenstein distinguishes between "the 'continuous seeing' of an aspect" and "the dawning of an aspect" (PI, p. 194). Taking up this distinction, Stephen Mulhall speaks of Wittgenstein's having discovered "a type of continuous seeing-as . . . which informs all of our relations with the world, and is an element in our understanding of it."[17] Giving the claim an explicitly Heideggerian slant, Mulhall finds Wittgenstein to have discovered that in our relations with people, words, and pictures, "we encounter the world as always already saturated with human meaning."[18]

John McDowell's way of putting this – for the case of language – is to speak of hearing "someone else's meaning in his words," something we are able to do when we speak the language in question.[19] According to McDowell, Wittgenstein thinks of the "surface" of language not as

a series of meaningless noises but as already "thoughts," something to be understood:

> the outward aspect of linguistic behavior – what a speaker makes available to others – must be characterized in terms of the contents of utterances (the thoughts they express). Of course such an outward aspect cannot be conceived as made available to just anyone; command of the language is needed in order to put one in direct cognitive contact with that in which someone's meaning consists.[20]

Direct cognitive contact with meaning seems to be just what James is describing in his "*Pas de lieu Rhône que nous*" example – in just the book, even the chapters of the book – that Wittgenstein read so intensely. James states in "The Stream of Thought," for example, that "no word in an understood sentence comes to consciousness as a mere noise. We feel its meaning as it passes; . . ." (PP, 271). And as we saw at the end of section 3 in the preceding text, in a paragraph whose notion of the "soul" of a word Wittgenstein employs in the *Investigations*, James states that our "language would sound very different to us if we heard it without understanding, as we hear a foreign tongue." It would "sound different" not just as if it were at a higher pitch, but because we *understand* it. When the sounds snap into focus as the English sentence "Paddle your own canoe," so does their meaning. We experience the sounds as meaningful.

James thus calls attention to features of language – and of our relation to language – essential to Wittgenstein's "second sense" of meaning. Although James's name breaks to the surface only once in the passages from *Investigations* Part 2 to which I shall now turn, Wittgenstein's discussion corresponds in intricate ways to the *Principles* passages considered in section 3.

Section xi begins with what Wittgenstein calls "seeing an aspect," and with the well-known case of Jastrow's duck-rabbit – a drawing that can be seen either as a duck or as a rabbit. The drawing thus has two aspects, and our ability to see each of them is to some degree under our control. (Most of us can shift the aspect of the figure, although some people may be unable to see one aspect or another.) Wittgenstein also discusses, among many examples, a picture that smiles down at us from a wall (PI, p. 205), a drawing of a cube that

can be seen as a box, and hearing something as a variation on a theme (PI, p. 213).

Although these cases are in some way abnormal or unusual, Wittgenstein uses them, as the Gestalt psychologists had done, to illustrate our normal conceptual and perceptual abilities: our ability to experience changes of aspect, and to engage in "continuous aspect perception." As a way of focusing attention on these abilities, mid-way through section xi Wittgenstein introduces the idea that someone might lack them. Those "human beings lacking in the capacity to see something *as something*" are said to be "aspect blind" (PI, p. 213), and aspect blindness is "*akin* to the lack of a 'musical ear'." Wittgenstein continues:

> The importance of this concept lies in the connection between the concepts of "seeing an aspect" and "experiencing the meaning of a word." For we want to ask "What would you be missing if you did not *experience* the meaning of a word?"
>
> What would you be missing, for instance, if you did not understand the request to pronounce the word "till" and to mean it as a verb, – or if you did not feel that a word lost its meaning and became a mere sound if it was repeated ten times over? (PI, p. 214).

These remarks about experiencing the meaning of a word, and the example of a repeated word whose meaning seems to disappear, mark this as a place where the Jamesian discussions we considered in section 3 prove relevant.[21] In particular, James's discussion of the shift from "*Pas de lieu Rhône que nous*" to "Paddle your own canoe" is a change of aspect in the sense Wittgenstein identifies. We have also seen that James emphasizes the "feel" of words in a language we speak, and that he provides the example of a word seeming to lose its meaning through repetition. Repeating a word does not of course strip it of meaning – if we pronounce the word "till" again and again in isolation it remains a good English word – but it *feels* that way, and this is the point made by James and then by Wittgenstein. James had written that such a repeated word comes to assume "an entirely unnatural aspect." Wittgenstein is interested in the significance of this "unnatural aspect" of words, and correspondingly in the significance of the "natural aspect" they mostly have. Wittgenstein's question, in

the paragraph quoted in the preceding text, is: "What would you be missing . . . if you did not feel that a word lost its meaning and became a mere sound if it was repeated ten times over?" The answers he gives to this question include: you would be missing a certain experience of the meaning (or meaningfulness) of the word, for example, the "glance which a word in a certain context casts at us";[22] you would be blind to a kind or part of the meaning of the word; you would have a "different relationship" to language than "ours" (PI, p. 214).

The pages leading up to Wittgenstein's citation of James on page 219 continue to develop Wittgenstein's two uses of meaning and understanding. In the primary sense, "meaning is as little an experience as intending":

> Someone tells me: "Wait for me by the bank." Question: did you, *as you were saying the word,* mean this bank? – This question is of the same kind as "Did you intend to say such-and-such to him on your way to meet him?" It refers to a definite time (the time of walking, as the former question refers to the time of speaking) – but not to an *experience* during that time. Meaning is as little an experience as intending. (PI, pp. 216–17).

A page later, Wittgenstein writes: "Meaning it is not a process which accompanies a word. For no *process* could have the consequences of meaning" (PI, p. 218). What are the "consequences of meaning"? One such consequence, to use an example from Wittgenstein's manuscripts, is that one can score a goal in soccer but not in tennis.[23] One would be quite mistaken to look for some "goal scoring phenomenon" occurring in soccer but not in tennis. Scoring a goal is a process, yes, in the sense that it involves a ball passing over a line into territory bounded by a net; but it has a logical form that includes the rules of soccer, and it is in virtue of this form that the goal can be scored in soccer. It is the lack of this form, these rules, that prevents a goal being scored in tennis. Tennis is a different game.[24]

Meaning is not an experience, Wittgenstein continues, but nevertheless there are experiences of meaning, to which the aspect-blind are blind. Here James's material begins to play a more positive role:

> The familiar physiognomy of a word, the feeling that it has taken up its meaning into itself, that it is an actual likeness of its meaning – there could be human beings to whom all this was alien. (They would not have an attachment to their

words.) – And how are these feelings. manifested among us? – By the way we choose and value words (PI, p. 218).[25]

Note Wittgenstein's use, twice, of "feeling," a word often favored by James, and his claim that most human beings have these feelings of language.

In the next paragraph Wittgenstein reports in some detail on how "we choose and value words":

How do I find the "right" word? How do I choose among words? Without doubt it is sometimes as if I were comparing them by fine differences of smell: *That* is too. . . . . *that* is too. . . . , – *this* is the right one. – But I do not always have to make judgments, give explanations; often I might only say: "It simply isn't right yet." I am dissatisfied, I go on looking. At last a word comes: "*That's* it!" *Sometimes* I can say why. This is simply what searching, this is what finding, is like here (PI, p. 218).

This is a wonderful example of ordinary language observation, the sort of "description" that in Wittgenstein's later philosophy is supposed to counter the demand for, and in some way replace, "explanation." These words – "That is too . . . (short or long or bright or shiny or salty . . .)" are in fact the kind of thing we say in the midst of such activities as adjusting the soup seasoning, the salad mix, or the proportions of a margarita; choosing a color to paint the bedroom; knowing when to stop and to start talking; or learning to hit a backhand. Notice the confluence of Wittgenstein's and James's positions: both stress the multiplicity of ways in which we find the right word, and the kinds of judgments Wittgenstein describes require just the sort of present-tense, experiential grasp of language that James records in speaking of our "feeling the meaning" of language.

A paragraph before the introduction of James's name, Wittgenstein's discussion continues with the point that although we cannot always say why "this is too . . ." and "that is too . . .", sometimes we can

say a *great deal* about a fine aesthetic difference. – The first thing you say may, of course, be just: "*This* word fits, *that* doesn't" – or something of the kind. But then you can discuss all the extensive ramifications of the tie-up effected by each of the words. That first judgment is *not* the end of the matter, for it is the field of force of a word that is decisive (PI, p. 219).

This again is "linguistic philosophy" that brings us back to our life with language; and to poetry and music. What does Wittgenstein mean by "the field of force of a word"? His explanation utilizes one of his favorite words – "Zusammenhangen," here translated as "tie-up," (or more literally, *hang together*). Wittgenstein is saying that the way our words hang together with one another can be revealed by exploring their field ("feld"), the territory they constitute. This is not something that is revealed in an instant, in a "first judgment" or "Kodak moment." James wrote that with each "definite image" in our mind, "goes the sense of its relations, near and remote, the dying echo of whence it came to us, the dawning sense of whither it is to lead" (PP, 246). This may be true, but rich as such an experience may be, it is not enough to constitute "the field of force of a word." The field is grammatical or cultural, constituted by our practices or forms of life. It is not psychologically introspectible, not a property of someone's consciousness.

Yet Wittgenstein does call attention to our experiences with and of language, as we listen to a song, read a poem, or catch the peculiar flavor of a new friend's vocabulary. He speaks of a poem or a musical theme as having no paradigm outside itself, but then adds: "yet after all there is a paradigm outside the theme: namely the rhythm of our language, of our thinking and feeling" (RPP, 435). James wrote about these rhythms, and his discussions of the "feel" of language – as English or French, filled with its meaning or blank and soulless – are congruent with Wittgenstein's discussions.

Yet James appears in Wittgenstein's final text only as an object of criticism: as someone who psychologizes meaning and understanding, ignoring their "logical" or "grammatical" nature. Here then, is Wittgenstein citing James:

> "The word is on the tip of my tongue." What is going on in my consciousness? That is not the point at all. Whatever did go on was not what was meant by that expression. . . . "The word is on the tip of my tongue" tells you: the word which belongs here has escaped me, but I hope to find it soon. For the rest the verbal expression does no more than certain wordless behavior.
>
> James, in writing of this subject, is really trying to say: "What a remarkable experience! The word is not there yet, and yet in a certain sense is there, – or something is there, which *cannot* grow into anything but this word." – But this is not experience at all. *Interpreted* as experience it does indeed look odd.

As does intention, when it is interpreted as the accompaniment of action; or again, like minus one interpreted as a cardinal number.

The words "It's on the tip of my tongue" are no more the expression of an experience than "Now I know how to go on!" – We use them in *certain situations*, and they are surrounded by behavior of a special kind, and also by some characteristic experiences. In particular they are frequently followed by *finding* the word. (Ask yourself: "What would it be like if human beings *never* found the word that was on the tip of their tongue?") (PI, p. 219).

An earlier version shows Wittgenstein's appreciation of the tug of James's example, although he is just as critical of James: "'Yes, I know the word. It's on the tip of my tongue.' – Here the idea forces itself on one, of the gap which James speaks of, which only this word will fit into, and so on. – One is somehow as it were already experiencing the word, although it is not yet there. – One experiences a *growing* word" (RPP, 254). This is one of Wittgenstein's stranger criticisms, for the idea of "growing" seems not to be present in James's text.

In the criticism's final form in the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein relies on the distinction between meaning and "what is going on in my consciousness." There is no point in checking anybody's consciousness in order to find what an expression means. He criticizes James for not being clear about what he is doing: he is really trying to say (is he?) "what a remarkable experience," but failing in two ways. First he doesn't just say this but invents a theory of "wraiths" in "gaps" to account for it. Second, and more fundamentally, it's not an experience anyway. "*Interpreted* as experience it does indeed seem odd." If we don't interpret the word on the tip of one's tongue as an experience, the oddity allegedly disappears.

James had written of gaps in our consciousness, with a "sort of wraith" of the word we are trying to find in each gap, so that if "wrong names are proposed to us, this singularly definite gap acts immediately so as to negate them." Wittgenstein states that "What is going on in my consciousness is not the point at all. Whatever did go on was not what was meant by that expression." This criticism is in a way unfair to James, because James does not regard himself in this passage as giving the meaning of any expression, but just as describing how it is with us as we search for a word we can all but remember. Yet, James is trying to discover what having a word on the tip of one's tongue *is*,[26] and Wittgenstein – working on both a linguistic and an ontological level at

once – is saying that having a word on the tip of one's tongue is not an experience. This is the point of his asking us to imagine people saying "the word's on the tip of my tongue" but never finding the word in question. The language game in which this remark has its home could not then exist; it is the game or use rather than just what *occurs* at some moment of its use that gives the expression its meaning – and it is the pattern of phenomena interwoven with our use of the expression that makes having a word on the tip of one's tongue what it is.[27]

Although he is mentioned only in connection with the phenomenon of having a word on the tip of one's tongue, the paragraphs we have been examining from the *Investigations* incorporate James's idea that a word has a familiar physiognomy or "soul." Wittgenstein kept working over this idea in the pages of the *Investigations*, asking later, for example, whether one would be "inclined to say that Wednesday was fat and Tuesday lean, or *vice versa*?" He reports a strong inclination toward the former, but refuses to speculate about "the causes of this phenomenon," and ends the paragraph in his "descriptive" mode: "Whatever the explanation, – the inclination is there" (PI, p. 216). How to weave the role of such inclinations into his general account of meaning was one of the unfinished tasks Wittgenstein faced in the late 1940s.

5

A crucial contrast between Wittgenstein's Tractarian account of language and his account in the *Investigations* concerns the idea that there is one and only one complete analysis of a proposition, an "essential" analysis. In the *Investigations* Wittgenstein maintains that in an important sense there is no essence to language. As I discussed in Chapter 2, James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* provides an antecedent of Wittgenstein's view that there is no *one feature* (or *essence*) running through all instances of families, games, religions, etc. The antiessentialist view to which we now turn concerns not the structure of concepts ("essential" features present in all instances versus the looser intertwined strands of family resemblances), but the *plurality of analyses* of concepts – an idea present both in James's *Principles of Psychology* and in the *Investigations*.

In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein maintains that a "proposition has one and only one complete analysis" (TLP, 3.25). Along with many other philosophers in the "analytic" tradition, he believed that an analysis would reveal a more "fundamental" (PI, 63) or "elementary" (TLP, 5.5562) form of language. There is a metaphysical payoff for logical analysis: it exposes the structure of the world, a world that is a "totality of facts, not of things" (TLP, 1.1). Wittgenstein argues that completely analyzed propositions picture reality (TLP, 4.01), and that the system of propositions shows or displays "the logical form of reality" (TLP, 4.121).

In the early pages of the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein subjects his former views about analysis to multiple attacks. For example:

> When I say: "My broom is in the corner," – is this really a statement about the broomstick and the brush? Well, it could at any rate be replaced by a statement giving the position of the stick and the position of the brush. And this statement is surely a further analyzed form of the first one. – But why do I call it "further analyzed"? . . . does someone who says that the broom is in the corner really mean: the broomstick is there, and so is the brush, and the broomstick is fixed in the brush? – If we were to ask anyone if he meant this he would probably say that he had not thought specially of the broomstick or specially of the brush at all. And that would be the *right* answer, for he meant to speak neither of the stick nor of the brush in particular. Suppose that, instead of saying "Bring me the broom," you said "Bring me the broomstick and the brush which is fitted on to it."! Isn't the answer: "Do you want the broom? Why do you put it so oddly?" (PI, 60).

It is hard to appreciate the force of Wittgenstein's diagnosis and treatment here without a thorough study of the philosophy of Wittgenstein's own time, especially that of his teacher, Bertrand Russell. Wittgenstein rejects the entire approach of trying to find something that *underlies* ordinary language. Instead, he asserts the *authority* of ordinary language.

Wittgenstein acknowledges that the statement about the broom in the corner could be "replaced" by the statement about the broomstick and the brush. So he is dealing with the first "use" of "meaning" distinguished previously in section 4, in which one grasps the meaning when one can replace the original with an equivalent or translation. Wittgenstein's point concerns analysis, however, and it is unclear

whether "analysis" is equivalent to "meaning." In any case the voice of instruction in the paragraph denies that the second sentence is an analyzed form of the first. There is nothing "hidden" by, or in, the first sentence that the second brings out. Indeed, the first sentence is usually just the one we want, a point he makes with the little drama that ends with the question "Why do you put it so oddly?"

In this clear, decisive commentary on his own dialogue, Wittgenstein pronounces one answer the "*right*" one. He shifts the question away from what the sentence "My broom is in the corner" means, to the related question of what *someone* means in saying it. The answer Wittgenstein finds to be right is that "He would probably say that he had not thought specially of the broomstick or specially of the brush at all." On the psychological as well as the linguistic level, then, Wittgenstein resists the view that there is something beneath the surface to be drawn out or uncovered by the investigator. We want, as Wittgenstein says a bit later, "to *understand* something that is already in plain view" (PI, 89). Yet we "predicate of the thing what lies in the method of representing it" (PI, 104).

The method of representation here, according to Baker and Hacker, "is language, as we conceive it under the spell of a misguided vision. We predicate of reality the correlate of the hidden sharpness we demand in order to ensure determinacy of sense."[28] James's phrase for the tendency of theorists to succumb to such demands, in which theory distorts or occludes what lies in plain view, is "The Psychologist's Fallacy . . . the *confusion of his own standpoint with that of the mental fact* about which he is making his report" (PP, 195). James returns to this fallacy in a paragraph from "The Stream of Thought" that focuses on the idea of analysis. This paragraph is in a section devoted to the claim that "However complex the object may be, the thought of it is one undivided state of consciousness" (PP, 266).[29] We miss the unity of each "pulse of subjectivity," James writes, because we commit the aforementioned "psychologist's fallacy," incorporating what we know about the object of the thought,

dropping the thought as it is in itself and talking of something else. We describe the things that appear to the thought, and we describe other thoughts *about* those things – as if these and the original thought were the same. If, for example, the thought be 'the pack of cards is on the table,' we say, "Well,

isn't it a thought of the pack of cards? Isn't it of the cards as included in the pack? Isn't it of the table? And of the legs of the table as well? The table has legs – how can you think the table without virtually thinking its legs? Hasn't our thought, then, all these parts – one part for the pack and another for the table? . . . . can our thought, then, be anything but an assemblage or pack of ideas, . . . ?"

Now not one of these assumptions is true (PP, 268).

At the center of this passage, James sets out a series of rhetorical questions that are hauntingly close to the questions Wittgenstein raises in section 60 of the *Investigations.* Wittgenstein's "voice of temptation" speaks of the sentence "The broom is in the corner" as perhaps being about the broomstick and the brush – that is about the parts of the broom; and James writes of our "inveterate habit" of confusing the thought of "The pack of cards is on the table" with thoughts about *parts* of the table and the pack – the table's legs, or the individual cards composing the pack. Both writers attack the idea that analysis reveals an underlying essence, at times with similar rhetoric. Wittgenstein writes: "Is this really a statement about the broomstick and the brush?"; and James asks: "Isn't it of the table? and of the legs of the table as well?" In both cases these questions, judged to be natural, or habitual at least, are rejected. For Wittgenstein they are a mark of bad philosophy; for James they are a sign of bad psychology. Of course, James is discussing "thought" and Wittgenstein various "logical" topics, of which thought is one. The deep affinities, however, center around the attempt to keep something ordinary or common (ordinary language, the untheorized stream of thought) away from the falsifying clutches of those who theorize about it, especially those who find something *else* that is alleged to be more basic or fundamental.

Wittgenstein holds in the *Investigations* that it "makes no sense at all to speak absolutely of the 'simple parts of a chair'" (PI, 47), and he gives up the Tractarian task of seeking the essence of language and of the world. The interlocutor in response to whom Wittgenstein introduces the idea of "family resemblances" condemns the idea precisely because Wittgenstein has given up searching for "the essence of a language-game": "'You take the easy way out! You talk about all sorts of language-games, but have nowhere said what the essence of a language-game, and hence of language is: what is common to all these activities. . . . So you let yourself off the very part of the

investigation that once gave you yourself the most headache ...'" (PI, 65). This is indeed the case, but that is because Wittgenstein sees the investigation as having lost its way, or, as he says of the science of psychology, conceptually confused. Wittgenstein, we have seen, rejects the search for essences – understood as "something that lies *beneath* the surface," something "that lies within, which we see when we look *into* the thing, and which an analysis digs out" (PI, 92). Philosophers are captured by a false, or illusory, ideal in trying "to grasp the incomparable essence of language. ... Whereas, of course, if the words "language," "experience," "world," have a use, it must be as humble a one as that of the words "table," "lamp," "door" (PI, 97).

If Wittgenstein rejects "essentialistic" analyses, however, he does allow for analyses that help us find our way out of a particular problem, that is, he favors analyses that have some use. Early in the *Investigations*, two voices are discussing the "Tractarian" sentence "RRBGGGRWW":

> But I do not know whether to say that the figure described by our sentence consists of four or of nine elements! Well, does the sentence consist or four letters or of nine? – And which are *its* elements, the types of letter or the letters? Does it matter which we say, so long as we avoid misunderstandings in any particular case? (PI, 48).

The point is a pragmatic one: as long as we can proceed without confusion, it doesn't matter which we say. In fact, Wittgenstein had already followed this pragmatic method earlier in the *Investigations* in describing the language of section 8: "The functions of the word 'slab' and the word 'block', are more alike than those of 'slab' and 'd'. But how we group words into kinds will depend on the aim of the classification – and on our own inclination" (PI, 17).

Now I think we are ready again for William James – not the James of *Pragmatism* – but the James of *The Principles of Psychology*. In his chapter on "Reasoning" James writes:

> *There is no property ABSOLUTELY essential to any one thing.* The same property which figures as the essence of a thing on one occasion becomes a very inessential feature upon another. Now that I am writing, it is essential that I conceive my paper as a surface for inscription. If I failed to do that, I should have to stop my work. But if I wished to light a fire, and no other materials were by, the essential way of conceiving the paper would be as combustible material; and I need then have no thought of any of its other destinations. It is really *all*

that it is: a combustible, a writing surface, a thin thing, a hydrocarbonaceous thing, a thing eight inches one way and ten another, a thing just one furlong east of a certain stone in my neighbor's field, an American thing, etc., etc., *ad infinitum*" (PP, 959–60).[30]

James here anticipates his later "pluralism" and "pragmatism." The paper, he is saying, is not essentially one sort of thing, but many sorts of things. Some of these things derive from its physical properties – for example, its ability to burn. Others depend on its history ("an American thing") or on our purposes ("a writing surface"). In the previous chapter, on "The Perception of Reality," James had highlighted these purposes: "*reality means simply relation to our emotional and active life . . . whatever excites and stimulates our interest is real* (PP, 924). It is "far too little recognized," James continues, "how entirely the intellect is built up of practical interests" (PP, 941). By the chapter on "Reasoning," this has become the claim that "*Classification and conception are purely teleological weapons of the mind*" (PP, 961).[31]

Such pragmatic strands seem to be woven into the *Investigations* in places where James isn't mentioned, for example at section 570, where Wittgenstein writes: "Concepts lead us to make investigations; are the expression of our interest, and direct our interest." Now that we have seen some of the intricate ways in which Jamesian themes appear in the *Investigations*, it is time to return to Wittgenstein's anxieties about pragmatism.

6

Pragmatism Reconsidered

> "Am I not getting closer and closer to saying that in the end logic cannot be described? You must look at the praxis of language, then you will see it" (OC, 501 [April 11, 1951]).

Twice in the last four years of his life – and in quite different contexts – Wittgenstein considers the relation of his philosophy to pragmatism. In Chapter 1, we considered his late epistemological work *On Certainty,* where Wittgenstein acknowledges that he is "trying to say something that sounds like pragmatism." I traced how the pragmatic epistemology James and Schiller called "humanism" and Wittgenstein's views in *On Certainty* run parallel at many points, but also found that important differences stem from Wittgenstein's commitment to logic or grammar, and the importance of skepticism in his account.

The other place where Wittgenstein considers his relation to pragmatism is the typescript, prepared in the fall of 1947, published as *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Volume I.* This was a work Wittgenstein composed from several manuscript books. Much of it appears in Part 2 of the *Investigations,* which was probably finished two years later.[1] In the *Remarks,* Wittgenstein focuses on psychology and meaning, the two great themes of the *Investigations.* He also raises the following question and answer: "But you aren't a pragmatist? No. For I am not saying that a proposition is true if it is useful" (RPP, 266).

We shall in due course consider Wittgenstein's grounds for his denial that he is a pragmatist, and the broader context of *Remarks*, where his remark occurs. I want to begin, however, by following the clue provided by Wittgenstein's placement of his question immediately after a paragraph that does find its way into the *Investigations*:

> How about religion's teaching that the soul can exist when the body has disintegrated? Do I understand what it teaches? Of course I understand it – I can imagine a lot here. (Pictures of these things have been painted too. And why should such a picture be only the incomplete reproduction of the spoken thought?[2] Why should it not perform the *same* service as what we say? And this service is the point) (RPP, 265).
>
> But you aren't a pragmatist? . . . (RPP, 266).

Juxtaposing a question about pragmatism with a series of questions about religion suggests the relevance of the greatest book on pragmatism and religion ever written, James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. This also happens to be the only explicitly pragmatist book we know Wittgenstein to have read. Yet although William James is mentioned more than any other writer in *Remarks*, he is never portrayed there as a pragmatist, nor as the author of *Varieties*; but only as the psychologist-philosopher we find in *The Principles of Psychology*. If pragmatism is, as Wittgenstein suggests, a presence in *Remarks* (and hence in the *Investigations*), *Varieties* helps us understand how deep and extensive it might be.

1

Although *Pragmatism* lay five years in the future when James published *Varieties* in 1902, his official commitment to pragmatism lay four years in the past – in his Berkeley lecture, "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results" (1898) (P, 257–70). *Varieties* is a deeply pragmatist work, not just because pragmatism is the philosophical position James defends in its chapter on "Philosophy" but because pragmatism was already his outlook and method at the time he wrote it. If *Varieties* portrays a variety of religious experiences, it also contains a variety of accounts of pragmatism, or at least a variety of doctrines called pragmatic. James puts forward, and at times runs together, at least four of the meanings

of pragmatism he was to distinguish in *Pragmatism*: pragmatism as a theory of truth, a theory of knowledge, a method, and – particularly important for Wittgenstein's question to himself in *Remarks* – a theory of meaning or significance.[3]

In the chapter of *Varieties* entitled "Philosophy" James introduces an "American philosopher of eminent originality, Mr. Charles Sanders Peirce." Peirce's "principle of *pragmatism*," according to James, is this:

> To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, we need then only consider what sensations, immediate or remote, we are conceivably to expect from it, and what conduct we must prepare in case the object should be true. Our conception of these practical consequences is for us the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all (VRE, 399).

James does not offer here a pragmatist account of *truth*, nor is he making the *epistemological* claim that the world can be "handled," and hence known, by a variety of practices. Rather he is talking about clear thought, about "conception" or "significance." Another statement of the principle confirms that James is offering an account of "meaning":

> To develop a thought's meaning we need therefore only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce; that conduct is for us its sole significance; and the tangible fact at the root of all our thought-distinctions is that there is no one of them so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice (VRE, 399).[4]

James uses this principle as the positivists were to use the verification criterion of meaning: to cast doubt on the significance of such traditional metaphysical attributes of God as necessity, immateriality, or self-sufficiency. For these attributes have no "definite connection with our life. . . ." Thus, if "we apply the principle of pragmatism to God's metaphysical attributes, as distinguished from his moral attributes, . . . we . . . should have to confess them to be destitute of all intelligible significance" (VRE, 400). The "principle of pragmatism" is a principle of *significance*.

James has considerably more sympathy for what he calls the "moral attributes of God" than he has for God's "metaphysical" attributes, precisely because they have definite consequences for human experience. The experience of being saved, for example, reveals God's love;

and the security of the "twice born" person's new life is a concrete expression of God's unalterability: "Being loving, he can pardon too. Being unalterable, we can count on him securely. These qualities enter into connection with our life. . . . That God's purpose in creation should be the manifestation of his glory is also an attribute which has definite relations to our practical life" (VRE, 401–2). James does not mean that we can "know" God's justice or experience God's unalterability, but that these conceptions of God play a role in constituting and organizing the experience of religious people. The case of the manifested glory of God is, James makes clear, a case of changed experience of the world, as in the newly significant ordinary world glimpsed by the English evangelist Billy Bray, for whom everything "'looked new . . . the people, the fields, the cattle, the trees. I was like a new man in a new world' " (VRE, 229).

Wittgenstein would of course have understood this sort of case from his own experiences as described in the "Lecture on Ethics" – "wondering at the existence of the world," or "seeing the world as a miracle" (LE, 43). But his agreement with James has to do with meaning and not just with experience; with the idea that certain religious terms are *significant* because of their role in organizing, describing, or just giving us a handle on certain experiences. At the time of his "Lecture" Wittgenstein held that religious language was, strictly speaking, "nonsense" (though "important" nonsense). But by the time of *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, he agrees with the pragmatist James that such language – and even religious pictures – is not nonsense, but "sense."

James's chapter of "Conclusions" contains a crucial pragmatic statement about God, using a quotation from J. H. Leuba:

> *God is not known, he is not understood; he is used.* . . . If he proves himself useful, the religious consciousness asks for no more than that. Does God really exist? How does he exist? What is he? are so many irrelevant questions. Not God, but life, more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life, is, in the last analysis, the end of religion (VRE, 453).

The claim here is not that the "use of God" proves that he exists. In fact, the question of God's existence is declared irrelevant. James's nuanced view concerns meaning more than truth: the "use of God" shows that religion is not "a mere anachronism," that it performs "a

permanent function" (VRE, 453). This function is its point, James is saying, a thought Wittgenstein echoes at section 265 in *Remarks* when he focuses on the "service" to which God is put. (Yet there is also here a view Wittgenstein rejects: that our language games all pay, namely in a "larger, richer, more satisfying life.")

James had introduced Peirce's pragmatic principle as a principle of "meaning" or "significance," and the conclusion toward which he drives is that religious concepts such as "God" or "God's unalterability" do have meaning, because of their "practical consequences."[5] James is also interested in the truth, not just in the significance of religious claims. He offers a " 'hypothesis' " that "may fit the facts" (VRE, 511): that individuals who are *phenomenologically* "saved from the wrongness" are in fact connected with a "higher part" of themselves that is "*conterminous and continuous with a MORE of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with* . . ." (VRE, 508). For our purposes in discussing *Remarks*, we should notice how clearly James here separates the question of meaning from that of truth. The *significance* of religious terms, unlike the truth of claims made using them, is precisely not a hypothesis; it is *established* by their use. Although James defends the "hypothesis" that religious claims are true, he does not take this claim to be established by the utility of believing it. He does not embrace here the crude pragmatic theory of his detractors, including Wittgenstein: that the true is the useful.[6] Rather, he holds a view much like the Wittgensteinian view that provokes Wittgenstein's question about his own pragmatism – that the "service" to which we put religious pictures, or religious teachings, provides or constitutes something we "understand."

2

Wittgenstein's question about his pragmatism appears in the immediate context of a discussion of religion. It is a discussion in which Wittgenstein brings out the identity between the "service" we perform with religious pictures and the service we perform with what we say. "The service is the point," Wittgenstein writes; and "the use gives the proposition its special sense." These statements reflect the concerns of the broader context of *Remarks* in which they are embedded: concerns not about epistemology or truth, but, as in much

of the *Investigations*, about linguistic meaning. Before returning to Wittgenstein's question about his own possible pragmatism, I want to step back a bit further, to the sections preceding section 266 of *Remarks*.

In these sections, as in many areas of the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein tries to understand the relation of linguistic meaning to various "psychological" phenomena: especially to moments of understanding and to "meaning-blindness" (a version of the aspect-blindness discussed in Chapter 5). The meaning-blind person lacks a set of abilities: the ability to hear a word such as *till* as a noun or a verb, or to feel that a "word that I understand had a definite slight aroma that corresponds to my understanding of it" (RPP, 243). It is not as if "meaning-blindness" is a concept fully set out; rather it is a concept in the process of development. Wittgenstein writes:

> Could one say that a meaning-blind man would reveal himself in this: One can have no success in saying to such a man: "You must hear this word as . . . , then you will say the sentence properly." That is the direction one gives someone in playing a piece of music. "Play this as if it were the answer" – and one perhaps adds a gesture.
>
> But how does anyone translate this gesture into playing? If he understands me, he now plays it more as I want him to (RPP, 247).

As we saw in Chapter 5, Wittgenstein both rejects psychological accounts of meaning and tries to find a place for such "experiences of meaning" as the meaning-blind person lacks. He finds James's views in *The Principles of Psychology* objectionable in regard to the former, and helpful in regard to the latter. James's name in fact appears in *Remarks* just twelve sections before Wittgenstein's reference to pragmatism, in a close ancestor of a passage in the *Investigations* we have previously considered:

> "Yes, I know the word. It's on the tip of my tongue. – " Here the idea forces itself on one, of the gap which James speaks of, which only this word will fit into, and so on. – One is somehow as it were already experiencing the word, although it is not yet there . . . (RPP, 254).[7]

Although Wittgenstein here acknowledges that the idea of this special experience "forces itself on one," something he does not quite do in the *Investigations*, he is no less critical of the idea. His central criticism, familiar by now, is that James interprets a *pattern* of behavior, context,

and certain characteristic experiences as "an experience" pure and simple. Once again, it is the James of *The Principles of Psychology*, not the James of *Pragmatism*, who appears in Wittgenstein's text.

In these sections Wittgenstein is working on a puzzle about meaning that reaches back to the first part of the *Investigations:* how meaning – which is not "an experience," not something psychological – can be, as we say, "grasped in a moment." For such grasping seems to be a certain kind of experience. In his treatment of this problem in *Remarks,* Wittgenstein stresses that grasping the meaning or coming to understand, just like being about to find a word on the tip of one's tongue, occurs in particular circumstances; and that it is usually followed by some set of actions:

> I said, the words "Now I can do it!" don't express an *experience.* Any more than these: "Now I am going to raise my arm." – But why don't they express any experience, any feeling – Well, how are they used? Both, e.g., are preliminary to an action. The fact that a statement makes reference to a point of time, at which time, however, nothing that it means, nothing of which it speaks, happens in the outer world, does not show us that it spoke of an experience (RPP, 244).

Prodding his readers to see the difference between meaning and the experience of grasping a meaning, Wittgenstein asks:

> Can one keep hold of the understanding of a meaning, as one can keep hold of a mental image? So if a meaning of the word suddenly strikes me – can it also stand still before my mind? (RPP, 251).
>
> "The whole plan came before my mind in a flash and stayed still like that for one minute." Here one would like to think that what stayed still can't be the same as what flashed upon one (RPP, 252).

Wittgenstein impugns not the experience of grasping in a flash but the description of it as *grasping the whole use in a flash.* For this crosses different pictures (as he puts it at PI, 191): of something momentary and something spread out over time.[8] The spread is of two sorts: the temporally extended use of a term, and the socially extended use of a term. When I suddenly come to understand a term, my understanding accords not only with *my past and future* uses of the term but with *other people's* past, present, and future uses of the term. These *uses* don't literally occur, or recur, in my experience, and Wittgenstein's lesson is that "There is nothing astonishing, nothing queer about what happens" (PI, 197). We can find this puzzling or we may just accept it.

Philosophers are perhaps best served by having our puzzlement occur and then be resolved.[9]

Wittgenstein returns again and again to this theme of how our grasping the meaning of an expression relates to the meaning of the expression that we grasp: at section 258 of *Remarks,* for example ("Of course the *meaning* occurred to me *then*!"), and again, just three sections before his question about pragmatism, at section 263:

> If the meaning has struck you, and you have not *forgotten* it again, you can now use the word in this way.
>
> If the meaning has occurred to you, you *know* it now, and its occurring to you was simply the beginning of knowing. Here there is no analogy with the experiencing of a mental image.

Wittgenstein next takes up the contrast between "the beginning of knowing" and the "use" of a word, just two sections before the question about pragmatism: "So I must *know* how, according to what technique, I think of using the sign "x". If someone asks me, say, "Do you know *how* you are going to use the word?" I shall answer: yes" (RPP, 264).

It is striking, then, amidst all this discussion of meaning, imagery, and usage, to find Wittgenstein introducing the subject of *religion* in the next section – a topic barely mentioned in the preceding two-hundred sixty-four sections of the *Remarks.*[10] It is equally remarkable that this subject is the one to provoke a question about pragmatism. Although it takes off from religion, the question extends beyond the passage about religion to Wittgenstein's entire account of meaning as use.

The religious picture, Wittgenstein states, performs "the same service as what we say," and so it is not "the incomplete reproduction of the spoken thought" but the – or a – thought itself. We understand the thought not by looking to some psychological event, but to the use of a picture, presumably in connection with certain teachings about "the soul." This thought is akin to James's idea that God is not known, but used; and to his complementary claim that such uses constitute the significance of religious ideas. Whether Wittgenstein was thinking of *Varieties* when he asked himself whether he was a pragmatist we are unlikely ever to know. What I hope to have shown is that *Varieties* provides evidence supporting the claim that he offers something akin to a pragmatic account of meaning. Consider, finally, the "But" ("Aber") in Wittgenstein's question: "But you aren't a pragmatist?" It suggests

that this question is not being raised for the first time, that a voice in the text keeps asking this question.

3

Let us now consider Wittgenstein's answer to his question about pragmatism, a straightforward "No." His reason is equally straightforward: "For I am not saying that a proposition is true if it is useful." He then adds: "The usefulness, i.e., the use, gives the proposition its special sense, the language-game gives it" (RPP, 266). The clearest and most important thing to say here is that Wittgenstein takes pragmatism to consist simply in the claim that "a proposition is true if it is useful." It should now be clear how much more pragmatism amounts to than a theory of truth. Wittgenstein might not be saying that a proposition is true if it is useful, and nevertheless still be a pragmatist – for example, he might be offering a pragmatic theory of meaning or a version of "humanism." Remember that section 265 of *Remarks* is not about truth, but explicitly about "understanding" and the "service" ("usefulness" in RPP, 266) to which a picture or a teaching is put.

As if to acknowledge this point, the second paragraph of section 266 in *Remarks* concerns meaning ("sense"), not truth. Wittgenstein in fact concedes quite a bit to pragmatism, for although he states that use does not make the proposition true, use, it seems, does make the proposition meaningful, giving it "its special sense." Wittgenstein's attention to the pragmatic theory of truth conceals this fundamental point.

The statement that "The use, gives the proposition its special sense" is of a piece with many of Wittgenstein's remarks about language. If he is referring to a specific proposition at this point, it presumably is the only proposition mentioned in section 265 of *Remarks,* namely: "The soul can exist when the body has disintegrated." Wittgenstein is saying that certain pictures perform the same service in "religion" as the proposition. The picture, he is saying, is not only an "incomplete reproduction" of the thought but (an expression of) the thought – because it serves, it is used, in the same way as the proposition. This service or use gives it its special or particular sense. Wittgenstein does indeed seem close here to the "pragmatist" James of *Varieties of Religious Experience,* who wrote: "The tangible fact at the root of all our thought-distinctions is

that there is no one of them so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice" (VRE, 444).

The third paragraph of section 266 in *Remarks* concerns "truths," not meaning. Wittgenstein reports that mathematical truths are useful, making the somewhat mysterious claim that they "reflect" usefulness. He of course would deny that their "usefulness" constitutes their truth, but he does not address the question of whether their use constitutes their significance.

Turning now to the remarks that follow section 266 of *Remarks*, consider its two immediate successors:

> The expression of soul in a face. One really needs to remember that a face with a soulful expression can be painted, in order to believe that it is merely shapes and colours that make this impression. It isn't to be believed, that it is merely the eyes – eyeball, lids, eyelashes etc. – of a human being, that one can be lost in the gaze of, into which one can look with astonishment and delight. And yet human eyes just do affect one like this (RPP, 267).
>
> Do I *believe* in a soul in someone else, when I look into his eyes with astonishment and delight? (RPP, 268).

How extraordinary that Wittgenstein's remarks about pragmatism should have been placed in his typescript among such remarks about religion and the soul! (If pragmatism is a characterization unwelcome to Wittgenstein, this shows how widely it might apply.) In section 265, "soul" is set in a religious context, and in sections 267–8 in a more naturalistic or psychological setting. In both cases, practice or "service" rather than sentences or propositions are in focus. Section 268 of *Remarks* undercuts *belief* (including, therefore, scientifically established belief) as the appropriate concept to describe a kind of understanding we have of people and pictures. The responses in which such understanding is manifested seem deeper than culturally variable practices; they lie at the level of those "very general facts of nature" to which our concepts "correspond" (PI, p. 230), around which our lives, and hence our concepts, form. One answer, then, to the question in section 268 is that I *believe* in a soul in someone else as much as I *believe* that the earth has existed for longer than the last second. The "beliefs" in question, if one wants to use the word, are not attitudes to propositions, but basic stances toward things – attitudes, actions, forms of human life, what Cavell calls our "attunement in words (hence in forms of life)."[11]

Wittgenstein's question "But you aren't a pragmatist?" is, then, surrounded by remarks about the soul that point to things we *do.* Some of these remarks – and in particular most of the remarks about religion and the soul in section 265 of *Remarks* – reappear, sometimes slightly altered, in the one-page section iv of *Investigations* Part 2, to which we shall soon turn. Before leaving *Remarks,* however, I want to consider a succession of four paragraphs shortly after section 266, the thrust of which will be familiar from our discussion of the emotions in Chapter 4:

> . . . Is it not important that for me hope lives in the breast? Isn't this a picture of one or another important bit of human behavior? Why does a human being believe a thought comes into his head? Or, more correctly, he does not *believe* it; he lives it . . . (RPP, 278).
>
> And if the picture of the thought in the head can force itself upon us, why not much more that of thought in the soul? (RPP, 279).
>
> What better picture of believing could there be, than the human being who, with the expression of belief, says "I believe"? (RPP, 280).
>
> The human being is the best picture of the human soul (RPP, 281).

Section 278 continues the contrast between belief and something else, here called *living.* We "live" thoughts in our heads, which, Wittgenstein suggests, gives this idea not only meaning but legitimacy. One is here reminded of Wittgenstein's statement in *On Certainty* that "My *life* shows I know, am certain, and so on" (OC, 7). Both statements direct our attention to what James would call the "cash-value" or practical consequences of something.[12] For example, my certainty that the chair I'm about to sit in will support me gives a certain tone to my life, which would be quite different if I thought it at all likely that this chair and other normal furniture might break or vanish into thin air. I am confident in this chair, as I live with this chair, and I am not disappointed by it – this is the "cash-value" of my certainty. I am, likewise, confident in the humanity of the people I live with (they are not robots or mere humanoids), in the myriad forms of human expression.[13]

Wittgenstein insists that our strikings of the breast and clutchings of the head are "important kinds of behavior"; and he finds that just as the picture of thought in the head "forces itself on us," so does the picture of thought in the soul. Wittgenstein's stance here is that of observer or describer: this is what we do, he is saying, this is how our concepts are formed. But if nothing is hidden, it may still be hard to accept the order

that there is, rather than the order or pattern for which we might wish. The human being may be the best picture of the human soul, but we might wish for an intimacy closer to its subject than a picture. What has to be accepted though, Wittgenstein is saying, is that the "pattern . . . in the weave of our life" (PI, p. 174) formed by these gestures we make, with the head and the hands and the face and the body, shows the human soul. We live our souls. The prominence Wittgenstein and James give human life in the formation of our concepts can be brought out by contrast with the theory of natural kind terms developed in the 1970s by Saul Kripke and Hilary Putnam. Putnam's reconstruction of meaning in "The Meaning of 'Meaning,"' for example, includes descriptions of a word's syntax, semantics, associated "stereotype," and, most importantly for our purposes, its extension. Putnam claims that the extension of a term "depends upon the actual nature of the particular things that serve as paradigms, and this actual nature is not, in general, fully known to the speaker."[14] The "actual nature" may only be known to the practitioners of a future science. So, on this account, an important part of a word's meaning could be *completely unknown to all speakers of the language.* For James and Wittgenstein, on the other hand, meaning is a fundamentally human phenomenon, constituted *within* human experience (for James) or language games (for Wittgenstein).

Interestingly, the Putnam of the 1980s moves in a pragmatist and pluralist direction, embracing both Wittgenstein and James (and Husserl) for their realism of "the commonsense world, . . . the world we experience ourselves as living in. . . ."[15] Although Putnam focuses on issues of realism rather than on issues of meaning in these writings, the identity of outlook he finds in James and Wittgenstein is expressed in their accounts of language as well as their accounts of knowledge. James and Wittgenstein both find authority in the lived world, whether thought of as "the stream of thought" or as "language games, "pure experience" or "forms of life." Obviously the reliance on ordinary *language* is more fully developed in Wittgenstein, but it is nevertheless completely in accord with a main tendency in James, as Putnam's discussions, both early and late, help us to see.[16]

The one-page section iv of *Investigations* Part 2 incorporates almost entirely some of the passages we have been considering from *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology.* It is oriented around the distinction between belief and something else – called "attitude" ("Einstellung")

in the central aphorism of the page: "My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul." ("Attitude" here occupies the niche occupied by "living" in *Remarks.*) Immediately following this remark is an almost verbatim transcription of section 265 in *Remarks*:

> Religion teaches that the soul can exist when the body has disintegrated. Now do I understand this teaching? – Of course I understand it – I can imagine plenty of things in connection with it. And haven't pictures of these things been painted? And why should such a picture be only an imperfect rendering of the spoken doctrine? Why should it not do the *same* service as the words? And it is the service which is the point.

If this sounded like pragmatism to the author of the *Investigations*, he was content nevertheless to let it stand – but not to let stand his question about pragmatism. That question would have reflected not only on the preceding paragraph but on the other remarks in this section, chiefly about the soul. For these all stress utility, service, and other practicalities *as relevant to meaning or significance.*

Section iv ends with a paragraph adapted from *Remarks,* defending the significance of our gestures, pictures, and responses:

> And how about such an expression as: "In my heart I understood when you said that," pointing to one's heart? Does one, perhaps, not *mean* this gesture? Of course one means it. Or is one conscious of using a mere figure? Indeed not. – It is not a figure that we choose, not a simile, yet it is a figurative expression (PI p. 178).

The expression is figurative because not literally true (as "In my heart there's a new valve" might be). When Wittgenstein alleges that "In my heart I understood" is "not a figure that we choose, not a simile," he suggests that it stems from something deeper than fashion or cultural practice, something more ingrained in humanity and "forced on us."

If the James who wrote that "man's thinking is organically connected with his conduct" (VRE, 398) was on the tip of his tongue when Wittgenstein asked himself in the late forties whether or not he was a pragmatist, he gives no clear sign of it, for James nowhere appears in Wittgenstein's typescripts *as a pragmatist.* Still, in the texts of this period Wittgenstein again and again applies the test of usefulness to ascertain a proposition's significance. "It is not every sentence-like formation," he writes,

that we know how to do something with, not every technique has an application in our life; and when we are tempted in philosophy to count some quite useless thing as a proposition, that is often because we have not considered its application sufficiently" (PI, 520).

The pragmatist James of *Varieties* could only nod his head in approval at such a formulation.

4

I have been concentrating on pragmatism as a theory of meaning or significance, but I want now to say something about pragmatic method, which has a broad affinity with Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy as a set of therapies.[17] James thought of pragmatism as a mediator or adjudicator between clashing theories: sometimes dissolving a longstanding philosophical problem, sometimes seeking a theory or temperament that incorporates the best of two opposed viewpoints. (Of course this reconciling temperament is found also in James's attempts in *The Principles of Psychology* to mediate between intellectualism and empiricism.) James introduces the idea of mediation early in the "Philosophy" chapter of *Varieties.* Reflecting on his previous remarks about the importance of experience, and hence of "feeling" in religion, James concludes that feelings are primary for religion, and intellectual interpretations are "interpretive . . . operations after the fact." Yet these interpretations seem to be natural, even inevitable: "Religious experience . . . spontaneously and inevitably engenders myths, superstitions, dogmas, creeds, and metaphysical theologies, and criticisms of one set of these by the adherents of the other." This is where philosophy steps in, "as moderator amid the clash of hypotheses, and mediator among the criticisms of one man's constructions by another . . . "(VRE, 389).[18] In his well-known example of a man chasing a squirrel around a tree, the pragmatist defuses a dispute about whether or not the man goes around the squirrel. If by "going round" one means passing north, east, south, and west of something, then the man does go round the squirrel. If by "going round" one means first facing the squirrel's front, then its side, then its back, then its front again, the man does not go round the squirrel. The point is not to side with one disputant or another, but to bring peace to the contending parties. "Make the distinction," James writes, "and there is no occasion for any farther dispute" (P, 28).

James thought of pragmatism as a method for solving otherwise interminable metaphysical controversies. Wittgenstein envisioned different methods in philosophy, "like different therapies," which would make philosophical problems "completely disappear" (PI, 133). They share the idea that philosophy treats its own excesses or pathologies: in Wittgenstein's case, our "bewitchment by means of language" (PI, 109), or a fixation on the methods of science; in James's case, "inveterate habits dear to professional philosophers" (P, 31). James wishes to settle "metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable" (P, 28), and Wittgenstein seeks a kind of "peace" (PI, 133). Wittgenstein did not seem to be thinking of this similarity in either of his two anxious comments about his own relation to pragmatism, but it nevertheless provides further evidence for an affirmative answer to his question to himself: "But you aren't a pragmatist?"

Now pragmatism is not just concerned with philosophy. Especially in its Deweyan versions, it stresses not just the problems of philosophy but "the problems of men."[19] It means to have a real effect in the world. In "What's the Use of Calling Emerson a Pragmatist?" Cavell argues for a difference between the way pragmatism works and the way Wittgensteinian philosophy works: "It has been said that pragmatists wish their writing, like all good writing, to work – that is, to make a difference. But does writing (or art more generally) work in the ways that logic or technology work; and do any of these work in the way social organization works?"[20] Cavell's representative pragmatist is John Dewey, and his representative quotation is from Dewey's late work *Experience and Education*, where Dewey states: "Scientific method is the only authentic means at our command for getting at the significance of our everyday experiences of the world in which we live." This quotation does reflect a strain in Dewey – what Rorty calls the "'let's bring the scientific method to bear throughout culture' side of pragmatism."[21] In the work from which Cavell's quotation is drawn, however, Dewey explains that he means "science" in a broad sense, as the ability to learn from and control one's experience.[22] And in *Experience and Nature,* a far more important work, Dewey envisions science and art as parts of a larger whole, with the scientific *subordinated* to the aesthetic: "art – the mode of activity that is charged with meanings capable of immediately enjoyed possession – is the complete culmination of nature, and . . . "science"

is properly a handmaiden that conducts natural events to this happy issue."[23]

Cavell states that for Wittgenstein "the human subject has first to be discovered, as something strange to itself," and that such discoveries are foreign to the pragmatism of Dewey.[24] However much point there may be in this and other charges Cavell makes against Dewey, it seems hard to deny William James's contributions to the portrayal of the strangeness of the human self, especially in a work of James that Wittgenstein read, *The Varieties of Religious Experience.* It seems equally hard to deny the ability of James's texts to work on their readers in ways other than "logic or technology" work, as Wittgenstein's own experience with James's texts makes clear.

Yet I do want to agree with Cavell about the important differences between reading the pragmatists and reading Wittgenstein. Dewey, I always feel, talks *at,* rather than *to,* or *with,* his readers.[25] James is, of course, a different case, for in his writing we meet a human character or narrator, a "real human being," as Wittgenstein says. This human being is a friendly and engaging *tour guide to the phenomena,* who arranges and displays in vast tableaux the experiences of Tolstoy, Jonathan Edwards, and Saint Teresa. As we have seen, the guide all but confesses that he too exists among the "sick souls" he describes, and even surreptitiously narrates a horrifying experience of his own. Nevertheless, James mostly keeps his distance both from the audience and from the various experiences he describes and displays. In his texts, he "stands on the podium," as he did when delivering the lectures from which most of his published work derives.

In contrast, Wittgenstein never appears as a lecturer in his texts. The *Tractatus* is a set of "propositions" delivered, as it were, from on high. The *Investigations* contains dialogues between unidentified characters. No doubt, there is a voice one thinks of as Wittgenstein's own – the voice of correction or instruction, as Cavell has taught us to say. But this voice has to earn its authority among the contenders in the dialogues. It does not appear as "Wittgenstein" or as "the Professor." As Cavell also points out, the other voices, specifically what he calls the "voice of temptation," are *also* Wittgenstein's. If they weren't, they would be easier to get rid of. Wittgenstein's later philosophy leaves the reader to weigh Wittgenstein's words, and sets the reader a task

of self knowledge, of understanding. One tries to achieve enough of a surview of language and the temptations of philosophy to give one control over one's thinking – what Wittgenstein variously calls "knowing one's way about," or simply "peace."

In *Pragmatism,* James seems to envision a quite different project. For one thing, he has a large "movement" in mind. As he salutes Schiller and Dewey for their work in developing a "scientific logic" (P, 34), he embraces Giovanni Papini's idea that pragmatism is to be likened to

> a corridor in a hotel. Innumerable chambers open out of it. In one you may find a man writing an atheistic volume; in the next someone on his knees praying for faith and strength; in a third a chemist investigating a body's properties. In a fourth a system of idealistic metaphysics is being excogitated; in a fifth the impossibility of metaphysics is being shown. But they all own the corridor, and all must pass through it if they want a practicable way of getting into or out of their respective rooms" (P, 32).

This is the pragmatism of which Wittgenstein was deeply suspicious. It is pragmatism as a quasi-social project, allied with empiricism and the sciences. In the course of a successful pragmatist movement, James writes, "science and metaphysics would come much nearer together, would in fact work absolutely hand in hand" (P, 31). This is a kind of "work" Wittgenstein rejects – at least for philosophy – and it is also quite different from the work James describes in *Varieties,* where his concern is with "*the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude*..." (VRE, 36).

Although Cavell, just like Wittgenstein, resists applying the label "pragmatism" to Wittgenstein's thought, he was among the first to suggest it. In "Must We Mean What We Say?" (originally published in 1969), Cavell writes:

> Wittgenstein's role in combating the idea of privacy . . . and in emphasizing the *functions* and *contexts* of language, scarcely needs to be mentioned. It might be worth pointing out that these teachings are fundamental to American pragmatism; but then we must keep in mind how different their arguments sound, and admit that in philosophy it is the sound which makes all the difference.[26]

Cavell's remarks in "What's the Use of Calling Emerson a Pragmatist?" about the way Wittgenstein's philosophy works on its readers, and his discussion of the importance of skepticism in Wittgenstein's texts are, I take it, attempts to specify this difference in sound.

5

A further set of differences between Wittgenstein and the pragmatists derives from differences in their political and cultural outlooks. For pragmatism is, with a few exceptions, politically liberal,[27] whereas, as J. C. Nyíri has argued, Wittgenstein is in important ways a conservative.[28] The conservative, as Nyíri uses the term, is

> devoted to the familiar and mistrustful of all novelties; . . . he has a decisive preference for the experiences of life as opposed to the constructions of the intellect, and affirms instinctively the durable, the constant, the traditional; he is skeptical of every radicalism, of utopias, and of promises in regard to the future; he always begins with that which is concrete, and would rather underestimate than overestimate his fellow men.[29]

Nyíri finds Wittgenstein's conservatism expressed philosophically in his emphasis on the necessity of forms of life or "network[s] of tradition."[30] G. H. von Wright, one of Wittgenstein's literary executors, agrees on the fundamentally conservative cast of Wittgenstein's writing: "Wittgenstein's world view is anything but "prophetic." It has no vision of the future; rather it has a touch of nostalgia about the past."[31] To the extent that this is true of Wittgenstein, it sets him apart from both James and Dewey, whose stress on the future is definitive.[32]

Wittgenstein's conservative world view is on display in a draft preface for his unpublished book, *Philosophical Remarks*:

> This book is written for those who are in sympathy with the spirit in which it is written. This is not, I believe, the spirit of the main current of European and American civilization. The spirit of this civilization makes itself manifest in the industry, architecture and music of our time, in its fascism and socialism, and it is alien and uncongenial to the author.
>
> . . . the fact remains that I have no sympathy for the current of European civilization and do not understand its goals, if it has any. . . .
>
> It is all one to me whether or not the typical western scientist understands or appreciates my work, since he will not in any case understand the spirit in which I write. Our civilization is characterized by the word "progress." Progress is its form rather than making progress being one if its features. Typically it constructs. It is occupied with building an ever more complicated structure. . . .
>
> I am not interested in constructing a building, so much as in having a perspicuous view of the foundations of possible buildings (CV, 6–7).

These are the words of a mystic and poet, of a scrupulous philosopher, and of a pessimist about his times. Wittgenstein shares with Oswald Spengler – one of a group of thinkers he lists as having influenced him – the idea that our era is one of decline (CV, 19). From Wittgenstein's perspective the failure of classical music in the work of Mahler ("worthless" [CV, 67]) and Shoenberg[33] is a true indication of the accomplishments of the age. All the science and technology is just a diversion:

> It isn't absurd, e.g., to believe that the age of science and technology is the beginning of the end for humanity; that the idea of great progress is a delusion, along with the idea that the truth will ultimately be known; that there is nothing good or desirable about scientific knowledge and that mankind, in seeking it, is falling into a trap. It is by no means obvious that this is not how things are (CV, 56).

In the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein wants to return, to bring words home from their metaphysical to their everyday use. As Wittgenstein put it late in his life, "[w]here others go on ahead, I stay in one place (CV, 66)." James, just like generations of Americans, wants to leave, to strike out into the wild. The goal of leading ordinary language *back* to its everyday use seems diametrically opposed to pragmatism's open-ended voyaging *out*.

We can hear this difference in sound between Wittgenstein and the pragmatism of William James in a passage winding up *Pragmatism*'s chapter on "Pragmatism and Religion":

> I find myself willing to take the universe to be really dangerous and adventurous, without therefore backing out and crying 'no play.' . . . I am willing that there should be real losses and real gains, and no total preservation of all that is. I can believe in the ideal as an ultimate, not as an origin, and as an extract, not the whole. . . . The way of escape from evil on this system is *not* by getting it 'aufgehoben,' or preserved in the whole as an element essential but 'overcome.' *It is by dropping it out altogether, throwing it overboard and getting beyond it, helping to make a universe that shall forget its very place and name* (P, 142).

James clearly hopes to get somewhere, not return to the same place. He pursues an ideal which is "an ultimate, not . . . an origin." His orientation toward the future – characteristic of many American thinkers, including especially Emerson and Dewey – guides James's approach not

only to philosophical problems, but to philosophical vocabulary. If you follow "the pragmatic method," he writes, you cannot rest with any such traditional explanatory terms as "God," "Matter," or "Reason," but must instead

> 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 an indication of the ways in which existing realities may be *changed.*
>
> *Theories thus become instruments, not answers to enigmas, in which we can rest.* We don't lie back upon them, we move forward, and, on occasion, make nature over by their aid. Pragmatism unstiffens all our theories, limbers them up, and sets each one at work (P, 31–2).

Here is the James whose pragmatism calls for "results" and actions; the pragmatism Russell found to embrace an "appeal to force."[34]

Force seems to be an issue too in the Promethean transformations of nature spoken of in James's influential essay "The Moral Equivalent of War." Whereas Wittgenstein rejected schemes of social reconstruction whether of the left or the right, James advocated

> a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against *Nature.* . . . To coal and iron mines, to freight trains, to fishing fleets in December, to dishwashing, clothes-washing, and window-washing, to road-building and tunnel-making, to foundries and stoke-holes, and to the frames of skyscrapers, would our gilded youths be drafted off, according to their choice, to get the childishness knocked out of them, and to come back into society with healthier sympathies and soberer ideas.[35]

Wittgenstein too had his practical and heroic side. He forced himself to volunteer for the dangerous job of operating the searchlight on the boat on which he served in the First World War; and with his attraction to isolated settings in Norway or Ireland, he would have understood the merits of "fishing fleets in December." Wittgenstein was the son of a wealthy family who gave away his money, lived on oatmeal and cocoa while a schoolteacher in Trattenbach, and worked as an orderly in a London Hospital in the Second World War. He would have understood the benefits of humbling the "gilded youth." But the idea of a vast social scheme to achieve these results would have been anathema to Wittgenstein.[36]

Yet, a balanced picture of James's politics would have to consider his "Address on the Philippine Question," and his activities with the "Anti-Imperialist League" that opposed American expansionism during the Spanish–American War. James ridiculed Americans' desire to make the Filipinos "fit" for democracy, and warned that in "every national soul there lie potentialities of the most barefaced piracy, and our own American soul is no exception to the rule. Angelic impulses and predatory lusts divide our heart exactly as they divide the hearts of other countries.[37] At the end of his address, James notes the discontinuity between "the old liberalism and the new liberalism of our country." "We are," he regretfully concludes, "objects of fear to other lands."[38] In these statements, there is no great confidence in power, the future, or the capacity of science to solve all problems. Indeed, in the last years of his life James identified himself as an "anarchist and believer in small systems of things exclusively."[39]

As a philosopher too, James exposes the moral and epistemological limitations of what he calls "the athletic attitude" (VRE, 49). Religious experience includes periods of weakness and breakdown, but, James insists,

> our very infirmities help us unexpectedly. In the psychopathic temperament we have the emotionality which is the *sine quâ non* of moral perception; . . . What, then, is more natural than that this temperament should introduce one to regions of religious truth, to corners of the universe, which your robust Philistine type of nervous system, forever offering its biceps to be felt, thumping its breast, and thanking Heaven that it hasn't a single morbid fibre in it composition, would be sure to hide forever from its self-satisfied possessors?
>
> If there were such a thing as inspiration from a higher realm, it might well be that the neurotic temperament would furnish the chief condition of the requisite receptivity (VRE, 30–1).

Far from uniformly embracing the aggressive, dominating, "hearty" approach to the universe featured in standard caricatures of pragmatism, James gives equal credit to "receptivity." This is a posture Richard Poirier finds not only in *Varieties* but in the *Principles.* There is, Poirier states, a tension in James "between his promotions, compounded by self-advertisement, of will and action, and the more insinuated privilege he gives, as early as *Principles of Psychology,* to receptivity and to an Emersonian abandonment of acquired selfhood. . . ."[40]

If James is no brutish imperialist, Wittgenstein is no hidebound conservative. In the previously cited passage, he distinguishes the current culture's use of "the word 'progress' " from really "making progress" – which he does not condemn. Consider in this light the features of Wittgenstein's philosophy that lead Cavell to see it as within the tradition of "moral perfectionism" in the West – a tradition including not only Plato, Emerson, and Wittgenstein, but James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* and Dewey's *Experience and Nature*.[41] Central to this tradition is the "absolute responsibility of the self to itself."[42] This responsibility is never completed, but it can be met, so that, in Cavell's words, there may occur a "journey of ascent," if only one as humble as a fly leaving a fly bottle. But this then means that philosophy gets you somewhere better than where you started.

When he is thinking of Emerson along with Wittgenstein, as he often does, Cavell sees Wittgenstein as "taking the open road," hardly a "conservative" lifestyle:

> What seems to me evident is that Emerson's finding of founding as finding, say the transfiguration of philosophical grounding as lasting, could not have presented itself as a stable philosophical proposal before the configuration of philosophy established by the work of the later Heidegger and the later Wittgenstein, call this the establishing of thinking as knowing how to go on, being on the way, onward and onward. At each step, or level, explanation comes to an end; there is no level at which all explanations come, at which all end. An American might see this as taking the open road. The philosopher as the hobo of thought.[43]

To the degree to which we see Wittgenstein as conducting or establishing "thinking as knowing how to go on," we see progression, not simply reversion, according both with pragmatic fallibilism and with pragmatism's orientation toward the future. If Wittgenstein takes "the open road," may he not, in some important ways, travel along with the pragmatists?

Coda

As we look back over Wittgenstein's long engagement with William James – from his first reading of *Varieties* in 1912 to his consideration of *The Principles of Psychology* in the late 1940s – we see one original and powerful philosopher reading and rereading another. James and Wittgenstein offer us two original visions, two "modes of feeling the whole push," to use James's phrase. I have tried to show how these visions run parallel at certain points, how they diverge at others, and where Jamesean ideas enter the Wittgensteinian stream.

Wittgenstein found James's *Principles of Psychology* worth thinking with (and against), as he worked to complete one of the great works of twentieth-century philosophy, *Philosophical Investigations.* At the core of his intellectual relationship with James lies his deep trust in and affection for him, evident in his remark to Drury in 1929 that James was a good philosopher because he was a real human being. Wittgenstein not only found in James's texts a kindred religious spirit who understood the psychology of the "sick soul" and the "twice born," but a philosopher whose humanity was a part of his philosophical investigations; someone who worked with a sense that the problems of philosophy were not merely technical quandaries but problems of and for human beings.

James and Wittgenstein share a taste for the particularities of human life and a talent for depicting them, whether in the ordinary language dialogues of the *Investigations* or the portrayals of lived experience in *The Principles.* Wittgenstein once considered a line from *King*

Lear – "I'll teach you differences" – as a motto for the *Investigations*,[1] and it would equally well serve as a motto for *The Principles of Psychology* and other works of James. Wittgenstein teaches the differences between meaning and experience, and among our language games in such activities as giving orders, telling jokes, presenting a mathematical proof, praying, chatting, singing, greeting, and play-acting. James teaches us the differences between our normal experience of the words of our language and our experience of a mindlessly repeated word whose "soul has fled"; between a word that has an essential definition and one, such as "religion," that connotes "many characters which may alternately be equally important"; between the world of the healthy minded and that of the sick soul.

Both philosophers are averse to "abstraction" (PI, 97). James conceived of himself in *The Principles of Psychology* as describing the concrete particularities of a "stream of thought," which from moment to moment is "never precisely the same" (PP, 227). And in his late work, *A Pluralistic Universe*, James contrasts the "thick and burly" world with the "thin, abstract, indigent, and threadbare" descriptions of it given by philosophers.[2] He urges a return from such abstractions to "the thicket of experience in which we live,"[3] a movement to which Wittgenstein's later philosophy is also committed. James's world is a messy one, which he once compared to the

> dried human heads with which the Dyaks of Borneo deck their lodges. The skull forms a solid nucleus; but innumerable feathers, leaves, strings, beads, and loose appendices of every description float and dangle from it, and save that they terminate in it, seem to have nothing to do with one another. . . .[4]

Whereas James envisioned a variegated and changing world from the start, Wittgenstein's philosophy evolved from the Tractarian search for eternal, underlying essences, to an acknowledgment of the messy particulars – the "maze of little streets and squares" (PI, 18) – that he records in the *Investigations*. According to the *Tractatus*, there are just three things one can do with language: say, show, and utter nonsense. But by the time of the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein is able to answer the question "How many kinds of sentence are there?" as follows: "countless kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call 'symbols,' 'words,' 'sentences'" (PI, 23). The multiplicity and radical openness Wittgenstein finds in language extends to music and other forms of

human expression. "Tender expression in music," Wittgenstein writes, is not to be

> characterized in terms of degrees of loudness or tempo. Any more than a tender facial expression can be described in terms of the distribution of matter in space. As a matter of fact it can't even be explained by reference to a paradigm, since there are countless ways in which the same piece may be played with genuine expression (CV, 82).

These "countless ways" – or as James would put it, these "varieties" or this "plurality" – mean that there is no simple way of describing or categorizing things. The *Investigations* accordingly tracks a series of journeys "over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction"; and Wittgenstein speaks of it as composed of "a number of sketches of landscapes" (PI, ix). Gone from the scene is the eternal, crystalline structure portrayed and exemplified in the pages of the *Tractatus.*

Instead of searching behind or "above" phenomena, James and the later Wittgenstein both attempt to keep something ordinary, common, or concrete (the untheorized stream of thought, ordinary language) away from the falsifying clutches of theory. Wittgenstein observes our tendency to "predicate of the thing what lies in the method of representing it" (PI, 104), and holds that in philosophy we must do away with explanation and let description take its place. James similarly warns against "vicious intellectualism" and "the psychologist's fallacy" of confusing one's own theoretical standpoint with the phenomena being investigated.[5] He resists explanation in favor of an accepting description, as when he asks why people face the middle rather than the walls of a room. James answers:

> Nothing more can be said than that these are human ways, and that every creature *likes* its own ways, and takes to the following them as a matter of course. Science may come and consider these ways, and find that most of them are useful. But it is not for the sake of their utility that they are followed . . . (PP, 1007).

Wittgenstein's parallel thought is that explanations run out before one reaches any "absolute" foundation. "Our mistake," he writes, "is to look for an explanation where we ought to look at what happens as a 'proto-phenomenon'. That is, where we ought to have said: *this language-game is played*" (PI, 654). This is the point at which one passes "from explanation to mere description" (OC, 189). James's and Wittgenstein's shared

antitheoretical, antiexplanatory, devotion-to-the-concrete stance explains why both have been compared to the phenomenologists.[6]

The "proto-phenomena" Wittgenstein finds are things we do, language games we play; and so he shares with the pragmatist James an emphasis on a deep layer of human action or practice that informs our experience of the world – whether in religion, "common sense," or the web of our certainties. In James, pragmatic strata are found not only in *Pragmatism* and *The Varieties of Religious Experience*,[7] but in *The Principles of Psychology* – the book Wittgenstein studied for twenty years, the book that was at one time the only book on his shelf. *The Principles*'s great chapter on "The Stream of Thought," so important for Wittgenstein's thinking about language and thinking, also contains the statement that the mind "works on the data it receives very much as a sculptor works on his block of stone. In a sense the statue stood there from eternity. But there were a thousand different ones beside it, and the sculptor alone is to thank for having extricated this one from the rest" (PP, 277). This statement is a forerunner of James's claim in *Pragmatism* that "We carve out everything, just as we carve out constellations, to suit our human purposes" (P, 122).

We also find "the trail of the human serpent" – to use another of James's pragmatic metaphors – in *The Principles of Psychology*'s chapter on "Reasoning," where James states that the properties or essence of a thing depend on our purposes: "Now that I am writing, it is essential that I conceive my paper as a surface for inscription. . . . But if I wished to light a fire, and no other materials were by, the essential way of conceiving the paper would be as combustible material" (PP, 959). Classification and conception, James goes on to say, "are purely teleological weapons of the mind" (PP, 961).[8] Wittgenstein's parallel thought early in the *Investigations* is that "how we group words into kinds depends on the aim of our classification, – and on our own inclination" (PI, 17). More fundamentally, Wittgenstein holds that our very concepts are permeated by our interests: "Concepts lead us to make investigations; are the expression of our interest, and direct our interest" (PI, 570). If "essence is expressed by grammar" and grammar is expressed in concepts, then the essences of things are for Wittgenstein, to some degree at least, "the expression of our interest."[9]

Among these interests are the multiple forms of life and ways of thinking that we call religion, a subject that was of deep personal and

professional interest to both James and Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein's "Lecture on Ethics" and certain parts of the *Tractatus* mark this interest, as does his later writing, where he offers a defense of the significance of religious language in terms of the "service" to which it is put. A notebook passage from 1950 shows Wittgenstein offering an account of religious language based on "*practice*" ("*Die Praxis*"). For a religious believer, Wittgenstein holds, the question "Where does all this come from?" does not ask for a causal explanation, but is, rather, "expressing an attitude to all explanations." This attitude is not just private – it is "manifested in his life":

> the words you utter or what you think as you utter them are not what matters, so much as the difference they make at various points in your life. How do I know that two people mean the same when each says he believes in God? . . . A theology which insists on the use of certain particular words and phrases, and outlaws others, does not make anything clearer (Karl Barth). It gesticulates with words, as one might say, because it wants to say something and does not know how to express it. *Practice* gives the words their sense (CV, 85).

James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* is an album of such practices, showing the concrete differences in which religious forms of life consist, all with a pragmatist tinge. God is "not known," James states, "he is used." Wittgenstein follows the James of *Varieties* in defending the meaningfulness of religious language and images in terms of the "difference they make at various points in your life." Wittgenstein's thought that "*[p]ractice* gives the words their sense" echoes in section 265 of *Remarks*, where "the service is the point." It is this thought that, as we saw in Chapter 6, immediately precedes Wittgenstein's question about his own pragmatism.

Yet as we have also seen, there are fundamental differences between Wittgenstein's and James's conceptions of language, for James resolutely maintains a basic empiricism, whereas Wittgenstein eschews science for logic, rules, or, as in the later philosophy, "grammar." Our thought's meaning, James states in *Varieties,* consists in differences of "practice," but he then explains that we "develop a thought's meaning" by considering "what sensations, immediate or remote, we are conceivably to expect from it, and what conduct we must prepare in case the object should be true" (VRE, 399). Now no sensation, no occurrence, can have the normative force of a rule: "The individual's

inner experience cannot endow his practical ability with normative content."[10] James thinks of meaning as constituted solely by my sensations and my individual conduct; whereas Wittgenstein's critique of a necessarily private language directs us to the idea of the social determination of meaning (not that this by itself explains where "normative content" comes from). For Wittgenstein, significance is a matter of usage construed not as mere events, but as a system or practice of a community in which some utterances are *correct* or *a propos* and others are not. At the borders, or "foundations," of such a system we can only utter *nonsense*. For James, in contrast, significance can be constituted by mere sensations or movement.

For James the empiricist, "All homes lie in finite experience," and "Experiences are all."[11] According to such late essays as "Does 'Consciousness Exist?'" and "A World of Pure Experience," "pure experience" is something neither physical nor mental, out of which the physical and the mental are constructed. Wittgenstein, in contrast, criticizes the attempt to find in experience a basic *explanans* or "bedrock":

> The concept of experience: Like that of happening, of process, of state, of something, of fact, of description, and of report. Here we think we are standing on the hard bedrock ["harter Urgrund"], deeper than any special methods and language-games. But these extremely general terms have an extremely blurred meaning. They relate in practice to innumerable special cases, but that does not make them any *solider*; no, rather it makes them more fluid (RPP, 648).

Wittgenstein recognized that James was a great observer, describer, and defender of ultimate differences, but he found that James neglected the multiple strands of logical difference among our concepts of meaning, understanding, and experience. "If I wanted to write a book on Psychology," he once stated, "I should write of psychological categories. (The expression 'psychological phenomena' is itself queer)" (L, 216).

Yet after all this has been said, I come back to how fundamental practice is to both writers, and to the nagging question Wittgenstein put to himself: "But you aren't a pragmatist?" If I have been concerned to distinguish Wittgenstein from pragmatism I have also suggested ways in which he is close to pragmatism, especially to the pragmatism of James. To Cavell's question: "What's the Use of Calling Wittgenstein a Pragmatist?," I have replied that it directs attention to questions

raised by Wittgenstein: about the role of practice in his conception of linguistic meaning, and to his idea that our knowledge forms a "system" rooted in deeds.

"Pragmatism" is a term like "religion" as discussed in James's *Varieties* or "game" in the *Investigations*: a "family-resemblance" term, with no one feature running throughout. Most pragmatists are Americans, but being American is surely not essential to pragmatism: the cases of F. C. S. Schiller and Giovanni Papini show this much. If James is right, one need not even identify oneself as a pragmatist in order to be one – for he claims that Socrates "was an adept at it" and that Aristotle "used it methodically" (P, 30). Merely stressing logic, as Wittgenstein does, does not disqualify one from being a pragmatist. The work of Peirce and Putnams show this. Even denying that one is a pragmatist, as Wittgenstein does, does not prove that one is not a pragmatist, if we consider the case of C. S. Peirce, who rejected the term "pragmatism" in favor of his own "ugly" invention, "pragmaticism."[12] And if Wittgenstein includes a strong note of skepticism in his writings, one may argue that the absence of this note in pragmatism is "compensated for" by the pragmatists' nonegocentric vocabulary and "concrete," "practical" orientation – designed to head off skepticism before it really gets going.[13]

Yet I agree with Cavell on the inutility of calling Wittgenstein a pragmatist, especially given his own aversion to the term. (It would be better to call him a Jamesean!) Calling Wittgenstein a pragmatist would certainly be useless if pragmatism becomes an abstraction, or a "movement" that validates philosophies according to a narrow idea of their "effects." How ironic such straitjackets would be, considering James's allegiance to concrete differences among not only experiences but philosophers! Indeed, the question of whether Wittgenstein is a pragmatist invites us to consider how different even the classical American pragmatists – Peirce, James, and Dewey – are from one another. As I hope to have shown, Wittgenstein's affinities with pragmatism show up clearly against such Jamesean works as *Pragmatism, Varieties of Religious Experience,* and *The Principles of Psychology*. But as I also hope to have shown, the question of Wittgenstein's pragmatism is too restricted a rubric under which to consider either the extensive affinities and disagreements of these two great philosophers, or Wittgenstein's considerable debt to William James.

There is a famous picture of James and his Harvard colleague Josiah Royce, sitting on a stone wall in a New Hampshire field.[14] James is pointing his finger at Royce in mock anger, and the caption explains that he is saying to Royce: "Damn the absolute!" Royce posited an "absolute monism" behind all appearances that James found deeply unacceptable, false to his sense of the developing openness of experience.

Wittgenstein doesn't posit an absolute in the *Investigations* or *On Certainty*, but he does embrace a pervasive logic or grammar shaping all that we say and think. Yet James would not have wanted to say to Wittgenstein "Damn grammar!" For he would have recognized the kinship between Wittgenstein's "grammar" and his own "common sense" in *Pragmatism*, and would have been forced to acknowledge the force of Wittgenstein's criticisms of his unrelieved empiricism. On James's own principle of seeking a mediation between the tough- and the tender-minded, he should have been able to accept more "tender-mindedness" (i.e., "going by 'principles'" [P, 13]) in his accounts of language, the self, and knowledge.

James would have been pleased to see Wittgenstein's treatments of philosophers' bizarre "holidays" with language, and to participate in the therapeutic return to the thicket of our ordinary life with language for which the *Investigations* calls. But James would have also offered a resolute defense of pragmatism, with a warm welcome to Wittgenstein to join the extended pragmatist family – or, with a twinkle in his eye, an invitation to acknowledge that he is already a member. James might have pointed to the congruence of Wittgenstein's statements about the sense of religious language not only with *Varieties*, but with the final chapter of *Pragmatism*, entitled "Pragmatism and Religion" where, speaking of religious hypotheses, James writes that "If they have any use they have that amount of meaning. And the meaning will be true if the use squares well with life's other uses" (P, 131). James here embraces, while distinguishing, a pragmatic theory of meaning and a pragmatic theory of truth. The former – associating "use" and "meaning" – anticipates Wittgenstein's remarks about the role of "service," "practice," or "use" in giving sense to religious language.

Wittgenstein would no doubt have resisted James's invitations to join the pragmatist family, and might have found himself pointing a finger at James: criticizing his fundamentally "tough-minded" interpretation

of the world that, for all its interest in "ideals," its optimism, and its belief in freedom, is conceptually impoverished by its reliance on "facts" and "experiences" as fundamental categories. After having it out – in a mixture of German and English – the two men, I like to imagine, would have gotten up and headed off for a walk over the hillside, alternating discussions of literature and culture, philosophy and psychology, with appreciative silences before the unfolding world of nature.

Notes

Preface

1. *A Wittgenstein Workbook* (Oxford: Basil Backwell, 1970): 48.
2. They state: "A second appendix lists cross-references between William James's *Principles of Psychology* and Wittgenstein's later work; Wittgenstein regarded James as a classical exponent of the tradition in the philosophy of mind he was opposing, and James's views are often alluded to, when he is not mentioned by name, in the *Investigations* and the *Zettel*" (Ibid., 7).
3. Robin Haack, "Wittgenstein's Pragmatism," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1982: 163–71.

Introduction

1. Jacques Barzun, *A Stroll with William James* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983): 34.
2. Paul Engelmann, *Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein, with a Memoir*, trans. L. Furtmüller (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967): 143.
3. Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (New York: The Free Press, 1990): 223.
4. Ibid., 261, among many other places. See Chapters 1, 3, and 6.
5. *Letters to Russell, Keynes, and Moore*, ed. G. H. von Wright (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974) 10. *Sorge* means worry or anxiety.
6. John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy* (London: Duckworth, 1966): 434.

7. Stanley Cavell, "Declining Decline: Wittgenstein as a Philosopher of Culture," in *This New Yet Unapproachable America: Lectures after Emerson after Wittgenstein* (Albuquerque, NM: Living Batch Press, 1989): 29–75.
8. Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, 434.
9. On the Wittgenstein side, Garth Hallett's *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations"* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977) is an important exception to this generalization. The new interest in James among philosophers trained in the analytic tradition has been led by Hilary Putnam, and is evident in many of the contributions to *The Cambridge Companion to James*, ed. Ruth Anna Putnam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). See Hilary Putnam, *The Many Faces of Realism* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1987), and *Realism with a Human Face* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990): 217–51.
10. Ludwig Wittgenstein, "The Big Typescript," in *Philosophical Occasions*, eds. James Klagge and Alfred Nordmann (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993): 161–3.
11. See the four-part issue of *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance* on Emerson and Nietzsche, vol. 43, 1997.
12. In explaining that pragmatism is only a "new name for some old ways of thinking," James credits Socrates and Berkeley, among others, with having been pragmatists (P, 30).
13. Cf. Morris Dickstein, *The Revival of Pragmatism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).
14. See Goodman, *Pragmatism* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995): 1–20.
15. Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 12.
16. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity,* 53.
17. Putnam, *The Many Faces of Realism,* 12. For an account of Putnam's allegiance to Wittgenstein's method, see James Conant's introduction to Putnam, *Realism with a Human Face*, xxxiv–lvii.
18. Putnam, *The Many Faces of Realism*, 16–21.
19. Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1935); Henry James, *A Small Boy and Others* (New York: Scribner, 1913), and *Notes of a Son and Brother* (New York: Scribner, 1914); Gay Wilson Allen, *William James: A Biography* (New York: Viking, 1967). See also Daniel W. Bjork, *William James: The Center of His Vision* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), and Linda Simon, *Genuine Reality: A Life of William James* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998).
20. Gerald Myers, *William James: His Life and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986): 16.
21. Barzun, *A Stroll with William James*, 316–18.

22. Ibid., 9. On the James family, see R. W. B. Lewis, *The Jameses: A Family Narrative* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1991).
23. Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, 8.
24. Ibid., 11–12.
25. Ibid., 13.
26. See, for example, Jean Strouse, *Alice James* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980).
27. Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, 15.
28. But on Wittgenstein's loyalty and kindness to his friends, see M. O'C. Drury in K. T. Fann, *Wittgenstein: The Man and His Philosophy* (New York: Dell, 1967): 67.
29. M. O'C. Drury, in *Ludwig Wittgenstein, Personal Recollections*, ed. Rush Rhees (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield 1981): 104–5.
30. Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, 434. Jackson attended Wittgenstein's lectures in 1946–7, and his notes have been published in P. T. Geach, K. J. Shah, and A. C. Jackson, *Wittgenstein's Lectures on Philosophical Psychology, 1946–7* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). Wolfe Mays reports that in his lectures in 1940–2, "Wittgenstein read extracts from James' (sic) *Principles of Psychology* and discussed them critically" (Fann: 83).
31. Cavell, "What's the Use of Calling Emerson a Pragmatist?" in Dickstein, *The Revival of Pragmatism*, 72–80.

Chapter 1 Varieties of Pragmatic Experience

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Cambridge Letters*, ed. Brian McGuinness and G. H. von Wright (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995): 14.
2. *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Personal Recollections*, ed. Rush Rhees (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield): 121.
3. For a contrary interpretation, according to which James becomes an "anti-Promethean mystic" in *Varieties*, see Richard M. Gale, *The Divided Self of William James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), especially Chapter 9. For a defense of my interpretation, see Chapters 2 and 6.
4. For discussions of these criticisms see Russell B. Goodman, "What Wittgenstein Learned From William James," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 11 (1994): 340; and T. L. S. Sprigge, "James, Aboutness, and His British Critics," in *The Cambridge Companion to William James*, ed. Ruth Anna Putnam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 125–33.
5. See Bertrand Russell, *Logical and Philosophical Papers, 1909–13* (*Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, vol. 6) (London and New York; Routledge,

1992): 257–306. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Letters to Russell, Keynes, and Moore* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974): 9.

6. See Bertrand Russell, *The Analysis of Mind* (London: Routledge, 1921). Russell's distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and by description is anticipated by James on pages 216–18 in *The Principles of Psychology*. For Russell's favorable comments about James, see Russell, *Logical and Philosophical Papers*, 286–9. Louis Menand, an admirable writer on American thought and culture, is thus mistaken in writing of James that Russell "detested his philosophy." (Louis Menand, "William James and the Case of the Epileptic Patient," *The New York Review of Books*, XLV: 20, December 17, 1998: 93.) It was, rather, pragmatism, one of James's philosophical positions, that Russell detested.
7. Russell, *Logical and Philosophical Papers*, 292.
8. Ibid., 261.
9. Ibid., 279–80.
10. Ibid., 282.
11. Ibid., 280.
12. Ibid., 270.
13. Ibid., 266.
14. What Gale and McDermott call James's "prometheanism" is common to both works. See John McDermott, *Streams of Experience: Reflections on the History and Philosophy of American Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986): Chapter 3; and Gale, *The Divided Self of William James*, 7–215.
15. Ibid., 263.
16. In "The Will to Believe," James states that he is talking about options that are "living" (there is some "appeal" to each of two hypotheses) and forced ("there is no possibility" of not choosing) (*The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* [New York: Longmans Green, 1896]: 3).
17. Another case in point is Anscombe's remark to me, cited in the Preface (pp. ix–x).
18. Ibid., 281.
19. David Stern calls it "practical holism." See his *Wittgenstein on Mind and Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995): 120–7.
20. Cf. the following passage, where James offers a fundamental contrast between what lies outside experience altogether and what can be generated from the resources experience provides:

> From the fact that finite experiences must draw support from one another, philosophers pass to the notion that experiences *überhaupt* must need an absolute support. The denial of such a notion by humanism lies probably at the root of most of the dislike which it incurs. . . . [You say] that any opinion, however satisfactory, can count positively and absolutely as true only so far as it agrees with a standard beyond itself; and if you then forget that this standard perpetually grows

up endogenously inside the web of the experiences, you may carelessly go on to say that what distributively holds of each experience, holds also collectively of all experience, and that experience as such and in its totality owes whatever truth it may be possessed-of to its correspondence with absolute realities outside of its own being.

(William James, *The Meaning of Truth* (New York: Longmans Green, 1909): 91). See the discussion of James, Duhem, Quine, and Rorty in Isaac Nevo, "Continuing Empiricist Epistemology: Holistic Aspects in James's Pragmatism," *The Monist* 75, 1992: 458–76. James anticipates Quine's idea of the "web of belief," although he characteristically thinks of the web as composed of experiences, rather than propositions or beliefs.

21. Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (New York: The Free Press, 1990): 42–3.
22. G. E. Moore, "William James' 'Pragmatism,'" in *Philosophical Studies* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922): 138–9.
23. Ibid., 140.
24. Ibid., 100.
25. Ibid., 111.
26. Ibid., 145.
27. Ibid., 115.
28. Cf. "Two English Pragmatists," in *The Meaning of Truth.* Pages 272–86 address Russell specifically.
29. James, *The Meaning of Truth,* 184.
30. Ibid., 282.
31. Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism," in *From a Logical Point of View* (New York: Harper and Row, 1953): 41. For James's idea of "the web of the experiences" see note 20. See also the discussion in Roderick Chisholm, "William James's Theory of Truth," *The Monist* 75, 1992: 572–3; and in the introduction to Russell B. Goodman, *Pragmatism: A Contemporary Reader* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995): 1–20.
32. Christopher Hookway discusses Ramsey's pragmatism in "Inference, partial belief and psychological laws," in D. H. Mellor, ed., *Prospects for Pragmatism: Essays in Memory of F. P. Ramsey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 91–108.
33. Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius,* 259.
34. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974): 185.
35. O. K. Bouwsma, *Wittgenstein: Conversations, 1949–1951* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1986): 29.
36. See, for example, Ellen Kappy Suckiel, *The Pragmatic Philosophy of William James* (Notre Dame, IN and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), passim; Gerald Myers, "Pragmatism and Introspective Psychology," in *The Cambridge Companion to William James*: 11–24, and Owen Flanagan,

"Consciousness as a Pragmatist Views It," in *The Cambridge Companion to William James*: 25–48. Flanagan's paper is about *The Principles of Psychology*, but his title presupposes that James is already a pragmatist in this work. On the usefulness of such constructs as "me" in parsing the "stream of thought," see page 36. Charlene Haddock Seigfried points to an element of James's pragmatism found in *The Principles* when she writes that "[s]elective interest or apperception is a constant feature of James's writings, from before *Principles* to his last works," in "William James's Concrete Analysis of Experience," *The Monist* 75, 1992: 545. H. S. Thayer includes more from *The Principles* in his anthology on pragmatism than from any other work by James (H. S. Thayer, *Pragmatism: The Classic Writings* [Indianapolis, IN and Cambridge, MA: 1982]: 135–85). Compare Gale, *The Divided Self of William James*, 7–14, 222–3.

37. Other relevant passages include: "the states of consent and belief, characterized by repose on the purely intellectual side, are both intimately connected with subsequent practical activity" (pages 914 and 940–1 in *The Principles of Psychology*). Thanks to Charlene Seigfried and John McDermott for valuable suggestions about pragmatism in *The Principles of Psychology*.
38. Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, 579.
39. Cf. *The Principles of Psychology*, 934: "The most practically important [sensations], the more permanent ones, and the more aethetically apprehensible ones are selected from the mass, to be believed in most of all; the others are degraded to the position of mere signs and suggesters of these."
40. Cf. William James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), and Hilary Putnam, *The Many Faces of Realism* (Chicago: Open Court, 1987).
41. Reprinted in G. E. Moore, *Philosophical Papers* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1959).
42. John R. Searle, *Intentionality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983): 143–4. Searle identifies Wittgenstein's *On Certainty* as a crucial work on the subject in *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1992): 177.
43. Ibid., 159.
44. Ibid., 158.
45. A point emphasized by Stanley Cavell. See his *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), especially Part 4. On Wittgenstein and Dewey, see Cavell's *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990): 13–16. For Cavell's drawing of the distinction between Wittgenstein and the pragmatists on the grounds of skepticism, see

"What's the Use of Calling Emerson a Pragmatist?" in Morris Dickstein, ed., *The Revival of Pragmatism: New Essays on Social Thought, Law, and Culture* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1998): 77–8.

46. Peirce finds that endless metaphysical speculation results from the a priori method of much philosophy. He favors the methods of scientific inquiry, where "some external permanency" is allowed to fix our beliefs. See Charles S. Peirce, "The Fixation of Belief," in *The Essential Peirce*, vol. 1, eds. Nathan Houser and Christian Kloesel (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992): 109–23.
47. Cf. the discussion of Dewey in Russell B. Goodman, *American Philosophy and the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 110–14.
48. If for Wittgenstein the pragmatists are shallow in ignoring skepticism, for pragmatists such as Dewey or Rorty, Wittgenstein and Cavell are caught in the grip of an outmoded philosophical problematic. See John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, in *The Later Works of John Dewey*, vol. 4 (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984); and Richard Rorty, "Cavell on Skepticism," in *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1982): 176–90 (reprinted, with a reply by Cavell, in *Stanley Cavell: The Philosopher Responds to his Critics*, ed. Russell B. Goodman (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, forthcoming).
49. Thus, if Cavell is right in claiming that Wittgenstein leads us to a "truth in skepticism" about other minds – that with regard to others we may "live our skepticism" – then there is a dimension of human experience that pragmatism is designed to miss.
50. For the relation of pragmatism to Kant see Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Chapter 1; Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981): 60–4 and "Was Wittgenstein a Pragmatist?" in *Pragmatism: An Open Question* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995); and Goodman, *American Philosophy and the Romantic Tradition*: 87.
51. Bernard Williams, "Wittgenstein and Idealism," in Godfrey Vesey, ed., *Understanding Wittgenstein* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974): 91.
52. I can hear Hilary Putnam saying here: "But this is a good pragmatist question!" I agree.
53. A classic discussion of the problem, particularly as discussed in Wittgenstein's *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, is Barry Stroud, "Wittgenstein and Logical Necessity," in George Pitcher, ed., *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Doubleday, 1966): 477–96. See also G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, "Grammar and Necessity," in *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity, Volume 2 of an Analytical Commentary on the* Philosophical Investigations (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985): 263–347.

54. Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History,* 203.
55. Ibid., 216. For criticism of Putnam on this point, see Joseph Margolis, *The Flux of History and the Flux of Science* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993): 49–56 and 195–6.
56. Whether it fits Peirce or even Dewey is a question beyond the scope of this study. On Dewey, see his *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (New York: Henry Holt, 1938), and Thomas Burke, *Dewey's New Logic: A Reply to Russell* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). Peirce's pragmatism isn't an overarching theory, but rather finds its place within a "logical" or semiotic system. See Christopher Hookway, *Peirce: The Arguments of the Philosophers* (London: Routledge, 1985).
57. Ellen Kappy Suckiel, *The Pragmatic Philosophy of William James* (Notre Dame, IN and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982): 19.
58. Parentheses removed from second sentence.
59. Cf. *On Certainty*: 217, 220, 229, 232. Compare also Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics,* eds. G. H. von Wright, Rush Rhees, and G. E. M. Auscombe, trans. G. E. M. Auscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), Part V, Section 22, where he writes: "Do we count because it is practical to count? We count!"
60. The Jamesean equivalent of this statement is: "For pluralistic pragmatism, truth grows up inside of all the finite experiences. They lean on each other, but the whole of them, if such a whole there be, leans on nothing" (P, 125).
61. This last sentence presents two aspects, one empirical, one transcendental. Cf. Jonathan Lear, *Open Minded* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1998): 247 ff. See chapters 3 and 6 for further discussion of these two aspects of Wittgenstein's thought.
62. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason,* 178.
63. Ibid., 177.
64. On the importance of "the primitive" for the *Investigations* see Stanley Cavell, "Notes and Afterthoughts on the Opening of Wittgenstein's *Investigations,*" in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*: 285–6.

Chapter 2 Wittgenstein and *The Varieties of Religious Experience*

1. Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (New York: The Free Press, 1990): 387–8, and M. O'C. Drury, "Conversations with Wittgenstein," in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Personal Recollections,* ed. Rush Rhees (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield 1981): 165–6.
2. Drury, "Conversations with Wittgenstein," 184.
3. Ibid., 116.

4. Ibid., 120–1. Compare Drury's account in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Man and His Philosophy*, ed. K. T. Fann (New York: Dell, 1967): 68.
5. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Montaigne; or the Skeptic," in Richard Poirier, ed., *Ralph Waldo Emerson (The Oxford Writers,)* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990): 320.
6. Drury "Conversations with Wittgenstein," 116.
7. *Letters to Russell, Keynes, and Moore*, ed. G. H. von Wright (Oxford: Basil Blackwell), 1974.
8. *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell*, vol. 2 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1951): 143. Cf. Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, 64.
9. James is quoting Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*. See page 1361 in William James, *Writings 1902–1910* (New York: Library of America, 1987).
10. James wrote for example: "On the whole, the Latin races have leaned more towards . . . looking upon evil, as made up of ills and sins in the plural, . . . while the Germanic races have tended rather to think of Sin in the singular, and . . . never to be removed by any superficial piecemeal operations" (VRE, 127).
11. See the account of Wittgenstein's relation to Tolstoy's *Gospel in Brief* in Monk *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, 115 ff.
12. Cf. Leo Tolstoy, *A Confession*, trans. Aylmer Maude (London: Oxford University Press): 229.
13. See Paul Engelmann, *Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein with a Memoir* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967), passim; and the description of the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein sent to Ludwig Ficker, on page 143.
14. See P. M. S. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986). For the claim that Wittgenstein's "line of descent is from Kant rather than from the British Empiricists," see David Pears, *The False Prison* (Oxford: Oxford University Press): 289, and Chapter 3, note 23.
15. Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, 277.
16. Friedrich Waismann, "Notes on Talks With Wittgenstein," *Philosophical Review* 74, 1965: 16.
17. Cf. page 460 in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.
18. Stanley Cavell compares Wittgenstein's to Freudian therapy in "On the Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy," in his *Must We Mean What We Say*? (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), especially pages 66–7.
19. See, for example, Stanley Cavell, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990): 92. For Putnam's use of this idea, see James Conant's Introduction to Hilary Putnam's *Realism With a Human Face* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), e.g., xlvii–xlix.

20. Yet, "*Essence* is expressed by grammar" (PI, 371). See Chapters 3 and 6 for discussion of the transcendental and anthropological aspects of Wittgenstein's thought.
21. Stanley Cavell, *This New Yet Unapproachable America: Lectures after Emerson after Wittgenstein* (Albuquerque, NM: Living Batch Press, 1989): 75. Cavell speaks of the "voice of temptation and the voice of correctness" in "The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy" on page 71.
22. Stanley Cavell, "What's the Use of Calling Emerson a Pragmatist?" in Morris Dickstein, ed., *The Revival of Pragmatism: New Essays on Social Thought, Law, and Culture* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1998): 79.
23. Cf. Russell B. Goodman, *Pragmatism: A Contemporary Reader* (London and New York: Routledge): 19 fn. 69; and "Cavell and American Philosophy," in Russell B. Goodman, ed., *Stanley Cavell: The Philosopher Responds to His Critics* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, forthcoming).
24. Owen Flanagan, "Consciousness as a Pragmatist Views It," in *The Cambridge Companion to William James,* ed. Ruth Anna Putnam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 47.
25. Cavell, *Conditions,* 5.
26. Cf. Garth Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations"* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977): 40. G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker note that William Whewell also anticipates this notion in *The Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences* (1847) (*Wittgenstein, Understanding and Meaning* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980]: 325). There is no evidence, however, that Wittgenstein read Whewell.
27. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam, 1961).
28. Cf. sections 37, 340 in *Philosophical Investigations.*
29. As the stream of thought shifts its point of view. Cf. James's discussion of "The pack of cards is on the table" on page 272 in *The Principles of Psychology.*
30. Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations,"* 153.

Chapter 3 Wittgenstein and *The Principles of Psychology*: An Introduction

1. Manuscript 110: 117–8 (1930–1). Cited in S. Stephen Hilmy, *The Later Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987): 278 n. 319. Cf. page 123. The earliest citation of James in the Oxford edition of Wittgenstein's *Nachlass* is dated January 1, 1932, and occurs in "The Big Typescript" (Manuscript 213: 42 r).
2. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar,* ed. Rush Rhees, trans. Anthony Kenny (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974): 58.

3. Ibid., 60.
4. See P. Coope, T. Geach, et al., *A Wittgenstein Workbook* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967): Appendix 2; Garth Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations"* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977): passim; Russell B. Goodman, "What Wittgenstein Learned From William James," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 11: 2 (1994): 339–54.
5. Richard Gale, *The Divided Self of William James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 165. The context in which Gale makes this remark, however, is a discussion of James's commitment to a private language, hence the point at which Wittgenstein and James part company. See Chapter 5.
6. Hilmy, *The Later Wittgenstein*, 207. The latest reference to James occurs in a manuscript from 1950–1 (Manuscript 176): "Goethe's doctrine on the origin of spectral colors is not a theory which has proved inadequate, but is in fact no theory. It permits no predictions. It is just a vague thought-schema, of the kind one finds in James's psychology. There is no *experimentum crucis* which could decide for or against this doctrine." Quoted in Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations*," 767.
7. Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (New York: The Free Press, 1990): 477.
8. D. F. Pears, *The False Prison*. 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987–8); Colin McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984); David G. Stern, *Wittgenstein on Mind and Language* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press), 1995; Robert J. Fogelin, *Wittgenstein*, 2nd ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 1987): 176–7; Malcolm Budd, *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology* (London: Routledge, 1989): 157–64. James is not discussed in any of the papers appearing in *The New Wittgenstein*, ed. Alice Crary and Rupert Read (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), although Russell, Moore, Frege, Kierkegaard, Freud, and Augustine are. Even Hallett, the commentator most sensitive to Wittgenstein's positive influence on James, introduces Wittgenstein's use of *The Principles of Psychology* as follows (767): "Topics treated (usually critically) in Wittgenstein's explicit references to James are the following. . . . " Hallett is right, however, that when Wittgenstein *mentions* James, he is usually critical.
9. Ian Hacking, "Wittgenstein the Psychologist," *The New York Review*, April 1, 1982: 43, cited in Gerald Myers, *William James: His Life and Thought* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986): 487.
10. Hilmy, *The Later Wittgenstein*, 198.
11. On Ogden, see Ibid., 112.
12. Ibid., 196–7.

13. For an account of the conflict in James between disinterested scientific description and interested interpretation, see Charlene Haddock Seigfried, "James's Concrete Analysis of Experience," in *The Monist* 75, 1992: 540.
14. On Wittgenstein's relation to science, see the Preface to Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Remarks*, ed. Rush Rhees, trans. R. Hargreaves and R. White (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975); *Philosophical Investigations*: 109 ("It was true to say that our considerations could not be scientific ones"); and the discussion in Chapter 6.
15. Hilmy, *The Later Wittgenstein*, 212. According to Gale, the personalistic, individualistic, introspective approach wins out over the scientific, in James's thought. Gale points out, for example, that although the body plays an important role in James's account of the self, James does not base self-identity over time on it (Gale, *The Divided Self of William James*, 243).
16. William James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press), 1977: 13.
17. Ibid., 14.
18. In a letter to his brother Henry the twenty-six-year-old William writes:

    "I am struck more than I ever was with the hopelessness of us English, and with stronger reason the Germans, ever trying to compete with the French in matters of form or finite taste of any sort. They are sensitive to things which do not exist for us. . . . On the other hand the limitations of *reach* in the French mind strike me more and more,. . . . their delight in rallying round an official standard in all matters, in counting and dating everything from certain great names, their love of repeating catchwords and current phrases and sacrificing their independence of mind for the mere sake of meeting their hearer or reader on common ground, their metaphysical incapacity not only to deal with questions but to know what the questions are . . . stand out plainer and plainer the more I read in German. . . . we English stand between the French and the Germans both in taste and . . . spiritual intuition."

    Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, vol. I (Boston: Little, Brown, 1935): 284. James always sought such a mediating role for himself, for example, in the drama of *Pragmatism*, where "we pragmatists" perform this role.
19. See Perry's chapter, "James the Empiricist," *The Thought and Character of William James*, vol. 1: 449–62.
20. Wittgenstein condemns "false exactitude" in *Philosophical Grammar* on page 296. Cf. James's attacks on "vicious intellectualism."
21. Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973).
22. See for example, A. Philipps Griffiths, "Wittgenstein, Schopenhauer, and Ethics," in Godfrey Vesey, ed., *Understanding Wittgenstein* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974): 96–116; and Russell B. Goodman, "Wittgenstein and Schopenhauer on Ethics," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. XVII, no. 4, 1979: 437–47.

23. Stanley Cavell, "The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy," in Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976): 64–6 (originally published in 1962); P. M. S. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) (cf. the revised edition of 1986, where Hacker claims to have overemphasized the resemblances, and offers an account of some important differences); Pears, *The False Prison*, and his earlier *Ludwig Wittgenstein*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1986); and Ernst Konrad Specht, *The Foundations of Wittgenstein's Late Philosophy*, trans. D. E. Walford (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969). Hans Sluga discusses the influence of Schopenhauer on Wittgenstein's account of the self in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, ed. Hans Sluga and David Stern (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 349–50. See also Newton Garver, "Philosophy as Grammar," *Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, 162–5, and Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
24. Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, vol. 1: 214–5. His father, Henry James Sr., resisted a "college" education for his son on the grounds that it might corrupt him.
25. James mentions Weber, Wundt, Fechner, and Vierordt at page 192 of *The Principles of Psychology*. On the relative priority of G. Stanley Hall's laboratory at Johns Hopkins and James's at Harvard, see Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, vol. 2: 13–14, 22.
26. Ibid., vol. 2: 23.
27. Ibid., vol. 1: 214–15.
28. Ibid., vol. 1: 335.
29. First published in 1879, reprinted in *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1979), a volume originally published in 1896.
30. William James, *Essays in Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1978): 21. First published in 1878, in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy.*
31. Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, vol. 1: 325.
32. Jacques Barzun, *A Stroll With William James* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983): 34–82. Cf. Richard Poirier, *The Renewal of Literature* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1987).
33. See Richard Gale's account of James's commitment to a libertarian conception of free will in "Dewey's Naturalization of James," in *The Cambridge Companion to William James*: 56 ff.; and in his *The Divided Self of William James.*
34. *The Letters of William James*, ed. Henry James (Boston: Little Brown, 1926): 293–4.

35. David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Charles Hendel, (Indianapolis, IN and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1955): 60.
36. On the complexity of James's notion of introspection, and its relation to his pragmatism, see Gerald E. Myers, "Pragmatism and Introspective Psychology," in *The Cambridge Companion to William James*, 11–24.
37. This passage also contains a characteristic locution of James: all people, he says, "feel themselves thinking." One of the revolutionary features of James's philosophical psychology is the prominent place he gives to the role – including the cognitive role – of feelings in our mental life. Cf. my discussion of "The Feeling Intellect" in *American Philosophy and the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 69–89.
38. Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, vol. 2: 24.
39. This is one of many places in James's work where Emerson's influence is apparent. Cf. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Experience," in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 3: 29.
40. A point made by Hilary Putnam in "A Deweyan Conception of Democracy," in *Pragmatism: A Contemporary Reader*, ed. Russell B. Goodman (London and New York: Routledge): 196–9.
41. See the discussion of "voluntaristic structures" of knowledge in Goodman, *American Philosophy and the Romantic Tradition*, 24, 31, 56, and 77–80.
42. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, 146. Jonathan Lear calls this the *Investigations*'s "anthropological" strain. See his essay "Transcendental Anthropology," in *Open Minded* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1998): 247–81.
43. For some examples of such necessary connections, see Newton Garver, "Grammar and Necessity" in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, 160.
44. Cf. Ian Hacking, "Five Parables," in *Philosophy in History*, eds. Richard Rorty and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); John R. Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992): 175–96.
45. Cf. *Philosophical Investigations*, 154: "If there has to be anything 'behind the utterance of the formula' it is *particular circumstances*, which justify me in saying I can go on – when the formula occurs to me." For discussion of the nature and role of such circumstances, and particularly of the idea that a criterion is the criterion it is only in particular circumstances, see John McDowell, "Criteria, Defeasibility, and Knowledge," in *Meaning, Knowledge and Reality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998): 377 ff.
46. John McDowell, "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule," in *Mind, Value and Reality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998): 238.
47. Ibid., 241

48. Ibid, 242, quoting Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*: VI: 31.
49. Cf. Cavell: "On Wittgenstein's view, the agreement criteria depend upon lies in our natural reactions" (*Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990]: 94).
50. Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) 178. Cf. Cavell, "The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy," in *Must We Mean What We Say?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976): 66–8.
51. As Cavell states in "Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy," in *Must We Mean What We Say?*, 94.
52. A point made by Stephen Mulhall in *Stanley Cavell: Philosophy's Recounting of the Ordinary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994): 9.
53. Cavell, "Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy," 95–96.
54. McDowell, *Mind, Value and Reality*, 253.
55. James is also mentioned on page 151.
56. Cf. Bernard Williams, "Wittgenstein and Idealism," in Godfrey Vesey, ed., *Understanding Wittgenstein* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974): 76–95.
57. Wittgenstein, Typescript 213, *Kehrseite:* 33–4. Cited in Hilmy, *The Later Wittgenstein,* 278 n. 323.
58. Wittgenstein, Manuscript 138, 17 B, 1949; cited in Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations,"* 713.
59. Cited in Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations,"* 399.
60. *Eine Philosophische Betrachtung,* ed. R. Rhees, in L. Wittgenstein, *Schriften,* 5 (Frankfort on Main: Suhrkamp, 1970): 234. Cited in Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations,"* 575.
61. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion,* rev. ed., 151.
62. Bruce Wilshire, *William James and Phenomenology: A Study of "The Principles of Psychology"* (Bloomington, IN, 1968 and New York: AMS Press, 1979); and James Edie, *William James and Phenomenology* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987). Cf. Hilary Putnam (with Ruth Anna Putnam), "William James's Ideas," in Hilary Putnam, *Realism with a Human Face* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990): 217–31. That Wittgenstein too can be seen as a phenomenologist confirms the parallel between him and James. Cf. Nicholas Gier, *Wittgenstein and Phenomenology* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1981). Wittgenstein sought a "clear view" of certain phenomena, undistorted and uncluttered by philosophical or psychological theorizing. By the time of *Pragmatism,* James taught the contrary doctrine that "You can't weed out the human contribution" (P, 122).

Chapter 4 What Is It Like to Be a Human Being?

1. Thomas Nagel, "What is it Like to Be a Bat," *Philosophical Review*, 83 (1974): 435–50.
2. Bruce Wilshire, *William James and Phenomenology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1968 and New York: AMS Press, 1979): 125.
3. Norman Malcolm, "Wittgenstein on the Nature of the Mind," in N. Rescher, ed. *Studies in the Theory of Knowledge* (Oxford, 1970): 22.
4. Stanley Cavell, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990): 83.
5. *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, eds. Robert E. Spiller, et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971–), vol. 2: 84.
6. A slight misquotation: Wittgenstein substitutes "and" for "or".
7. For the notion of "internal audience," see W. C. Dowling, *The Critic's Hornbook – Reading for Interpretation* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1977), and *The Epistolary Moment: The Poetics of the Eighteenth-Century Verse Epistle* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).
8. The phrase is Cavell's. See his "The Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy," in *Must We Mean What We Say?* (New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1976): 65. For the claim that Wittgenstein's "line of descent is from Kant rather than from the British Empiricists," see Pears, *The False Prison*, 289; and Chapter 3, n. 27.
9. For an excellent account of some of the problems with James's view, see Gale, *The Divided Self of William James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 227–34, especially page 232.
10. Wittgenstein writes, for example: "What one can know, one can be convinced of – and can also conjecture. (Grammatical remark)" (RPP: 775).
11. In his commentary on section 412 of *Philosophical Investigations* Garth Hallett suggests that Wittgenstein refers here to a passage from James's "Attention" chapter, where James writes that the "eyes are fixed on vacancy, the sounds of the world melt into confused unity, the attention is dispersed . . . " (PP, 382). Yet in this passage, James is not describing introspection at all, but rather a distracted condition, that he contrasts with attentiveness. One may presumably hope to introspect or observe one's own thought regardless of whether one is distracted or attentive; but in many cases – and the search for the self of selves is one of them – James thinks of introspection as requiring attention, rather than proceeding from a kind of inattention. The vacant glance would accordingly be out of place in much introspection. Hallett's suggestion that the "feeling of an unbridegeable gulf between consciousness and brain-process" at section 411 of *Philosophical Investigations* refers to James's *Principles* seems more plausible (Garth Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical*

Investigations" [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press]: 454). James had written that the "chasm which yawns between [mental and physical events] is less easily bridged over by the mind than any interval we know"; and that the "ultimate of ultimate problems . . . in the study of thought and brain, is to understand why and how such disparate things are connected at all" (PP, 138, 178). It is not at all clear that James is mistaken in these claims. The mistake Wittgenstein is particularly trying to counter, however, is thinking that introspection is a method that will throw light on them.

12. Cavell writes of the "voice of temptation" and the "voice of correctness" on page 71 in "The Availability of Wittgenstein's Philosophy."
13. Hallett points out that Moore is a likely target too, for he writes in "A Defense of Common Sense" that "[t]he fact that I am conscious now is obviously, in a certain sense, a fact, with regard to a particular individual and a particular time, to the effect that that individual is conscious at that time." G. E. Moore, *Philosophical Papers* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1959): 46.
14. Cf. *Philosophical Investigations*, 306.
15. Cf. Robert J. Fogelin (Wittgenstein, 2nd ed. [London and New York: Routledge, 1995]), who writes that "for Wittgenstein, agreement between people 'is part of the framework . . .'"(168). For a careful discussion of Wittgenstein's statements in this area see Pears, *The False Prison*, 382 ff.
16. P. M. S. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986): 151, 152.
17. Cf. *Wittgenstein's Lectures on Philosophical Psychology*, 275: "First and third person difference characterizes all psychological phenomena." Cf. Fogelin, 187 ff. Wittgenstein didn't include this plan in the *Investigations*, but he does make many of the same points there.
18. See the discussion in Fogelin, 187 ff.
19. See Saul A. Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982). For critical discussions of Kripke's approach, see Colin McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984): 59–92; Pears, *The False Prison*: 442–3, 457–8, 463 ff.; John McDowell, "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule," in *Mind, Value and Reality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998): 222–62; and Stanley Cavell, "The Argument of the Ordinary: Scenes of Instruction in Wittgenstein and in Kripke," in *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome*: 64–100. For earlier views of the "private language argument" see the essays in Pitcher and Don Locke, *Myself and Others* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).
20. Cf. *Philosophical Investigations*, 259.
21. See the discussions in Pears, *The False Prison,* 382–3, and Cavell, see note 24.
22. See Gale: 162–6.

23. Gale, *The Divided Self of William James*: 165. Cf. the discussion of the "first-versus third-person aporia" in James's thought on pages 239–45.
24. Stanley Cavell, *This New Yet Unapproachable America: Lectures after Emerson after Wittgenstein* (Albuquerque, NM: Living Batch Press, 1989): 41–2.
25. Pears, *The False Prison*, 332.
26. *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1963): 7. Cf. Cavell, "Notes and Afterthoughts on the Opening of the *Investigations*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein*, 268.
27. See Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) Part 4. For criticism of Cavell on skepticism, see Michael Williams, *Unnatural Doubts: Epistemological Realism and the Basis of Skepticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).
28. Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*: 440.
29. Cf. *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome*, 92.
30. James's list of the "subtler emotions" includes pride, indignation, and "moral, intellectual, and aesthetic feelings."
31. For an account of the development of Wittgenstein's views in the early thirties, see David G. Stern, *Wittgenstein on Mind and Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
32. Budd notes the contrast on page 159 and offers a nuanced account of Wittgenstein's criticisms of James in the following pages.
33. See page 39 of *Wittgensteins Lectures on Philosophical Psychology* for Geach's account. These were presumably the lectures for which Wittgenstein considered using *The Principles of Psychology* as a text. Cf. Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 477.
34. Cf. *Philosophical Investigations*, 572.
35. Cf. Rogers Albritton, "On Wittgenstein's Notion of a Criterion," in George Pitcher, ed., *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Doubleday, 1966): 231–51; P. F. Strawson, *Individuals*; and discussions in Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973) and Hacker, *Insight and Illusion*, 307–35.

Chapter 5 Language and Meaning

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol. 1*, eds. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, trans. C. G. Luckhardt and Maximilian A. E. Aue (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982): section 294.

2. Grammar in the *Investigations* resembles what Wittgenstein used to call logic: "*Essence* is expressed by grammar" (PI, 371); and "Grammar tells us what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar)" (PI, 373).
3. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar,* ed. Rush Rhees, trans. Authony Kenny (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974): 69.
4. *Eine Philosophische Betrachtung,* ed. R. Rhees, in L. Wittgenstein, *Schriften,* 5 (Frankfort on the Main, 1970): 234. Cited in Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations"* (Ithaca, NY : Cornell University Press, 1977): 575. See Chapter 3.
5. Page 265 in the original edition.
6. See the discussion in Richard Gale, *The Divided Self of William James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 163–6.
7. First published in *Mind,* 1879 (first part) and in the *Princeton Review,* 1882, and reprinted in *The Will to Believe.*
8. Gale, *The Divided Self of William James,* 152. This is too narrow a rendition to fit all of James's statements. In *Varieties,* for example, he speaks not only of sensations we are to expect, but of "what conduct we must prepare." See page 201.
9. Gale, *The Divided Self of William James,* 162. Gale offers an excellent account of ways in which a pragmatic account of meaning might take a normative form on pages 159 ff. Cf. Christopher Hookway, "Logical Principles and Philosophical Attitudes," in *The Cambridge Companion to James,* ed. Ruth Anna Putnam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), especially 152 ff.
10. Cf. J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).
11. Italics removed.
12. This is probably the source for Wittgenstein's statement in *Philosophical Grammar* that "A man who reads a sentence in a familiar language experiences the different parts of speech in quite different ways," because James is mentioned later in the paragraph. See Chapter 3.
13. See Hallett's commentary on pages 193–219 of *Investigations,* entitled "Aspect Seeing and the Second Sense of *Meaning*"; on two senses of meaning also see Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations"*, 599.
14. Manuscript 229, para. 913; cited in Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations,"* 533.
15. M. O'C. Drury, in K. T. Fann, *Wittgenstein: The Man and His Philosophy* (New York: Dell, 1967): 67–8.
16. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief,* ed. C. Barrett (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966): 29.

17. Stephen Mulhall, *On Being in the World: Wittgenstein and Heidegger on Seeing Aspects* (London: Routledge, 1990): 121.
18. Ibid., 124. Cf. John McDowell, "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule," in *Mind, Value and Reality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998): 249.
19. McDowell, *Mind, Value and Reality,* 253.
20. Ibid., 249.
21. As noted in Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations,"* 703–4.
22. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol. 1*, ed. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, trans. C. G. Luckhardt and Maximilian A. E. Aue (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982): 366.
23. Manuscript. 229, para. 1235; cited in Hallett, *A Companion to Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations,"* 684.
24. For an account of the kinds of inferences licensed by grammar, see Newton Garver, "Philosophy as Grammar," in *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein,* especially pages 159–61.
25. When at section 568 of the *Investigations* Wittgenstein writes: "Meaning is a physiognomy," he uses the term "physiognomy" to describe meaning in the first sense, as connoting the spread-out use of a term in time and throughout various language games. Wittgenstein's translators also use the term here in section xi to capture "experiencing the meaning of a word," that is, meaning in the second sense. But the German original differentiates them, using "Physiognomie" in section 568 and "Gesicht" (visage?) on page 218. On the other hand, there is a passage in *The Brown Book* that corresponds to Wittgenstein's statement in section xi, and in it he employs the word "physiognomy": "Look at a written word, say 'read,' – 'It isn't just a scribble, it's "read", I should like to say, 'it has one definite physiognomy'" (BB, 170).
26. Actually, James doesn't use this expression, but it is well established in both English and German for the phenomenon he is describing. I use it because Wittgenstein does.
27. James seems still to be on Wittgenstein's mind on the next page, where he writes: "The question whether the muscles of the larynx are innervated in connection with internal speech, and similar things, may be of great interest, but not in our investigation" (PI, p. 220).
28. G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein, Understanding and Meaning,* vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980): 510.
29. Italics removed.
30. Hallett (139) cites this passage in connection with section 62 of *Philosophical Investigations,* where Wittgenstein states that "there is not always a sharp distinction between essential and inessential."

31. In a footnote, he adds that water is no more essentially H_2O than it is "a solvent of sugar or a slaker of thirst." Compare Putnam in *The Many Faces of Realism* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1987), for example, on page 19: "The logical primitives themselves, and in particular the notions of object and existence, have a multitude of different uses rather than one absolute 'meaning'."

Chapter 6 Pragmatism Reconsidered

1. Michael Biggs and Alois Pichler, *Wittgenstein: Two Source Catalogues and a Bibliography* (Bergen, Norway: University of Bergen, 1993): 25.
2. In the *Investigations*, page 178, Anscombe translates the relevant word, "Gedankens," as "doctrine," but the sentences in which this word appears are identical in the two works.
3. On the multiple meanings of pragmatism, the classic work is Arthur Lovejoy, *The Thirteen Pragmatisms* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963): 1–29. For discussion of the relation between James's theory of meaning and his theory of truth, see Richard Gale, *The Divided Self of William James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 150–6.
4. The word "fitted" in this definition marks it as a "normative" pragmatic definition, as distinguished in Chapter 6 of Gale, *The Divided Self of William James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
5. It is open to a defender of orthodox Christianity to reply on behalf of God's "metaphysical" attributes that they too play a role in the lives of believers, and in this sense do have practical consequences.
6. Near the end of "The Religion of Healthy-Mindedness," for example, James writes:

> The world can be handled according to many systems of ideas, and is so handled by different men, and will each time give some characteristic kind of profit, for which he cares, to the handler, while at the same time some other kind of profit has to be omitted or postponed. Science gives to all of us telegraphy, electric lighting, and diagnosis, and succeeds in preventing and curing a certain amount of disease. Religion in the shape of mind-cure gives to some of us serenity, moral poise, and happiness, and prevents certain forms of disease as well as science does, or even better in a certain class of persons. Evidently, then, science and religion are both of them genuine keys for unlocking the world's treasure-house to him who can use either of them practically . . . . why, after all, may not the world be so complex as to consist of many interpenetrating spheres of reality, which we can thus approach in alternation by using different conceptions and assuming different attitudes, just as mathematicians handle the same numerical and spatial facts by geometry, by analytical geometry, by algebra, by the calculus, or by quaternions, and each time come out right? (VRE: 116).

This is the territory of James's theory of truth, for James associates "systems of ideas" with "some characteristic kind of profit," and that profit with the ability of these systems to "unlock the world's treasure-house," and that unlocking in turn with an "approach" to "reality." He does not distinguish between the treasure of "serenity" and the treasure of "electricity" – they are both practical consequences of beliefs about reality by which people live.

7. Another passage in the area that echoes James is section 240 of *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*: "I should like to say: conversation, the application and further interpretation of words flows on and only in this current does a word have its meaning." Cf. *The Principles of Psychology*, 243–5.
8. Cf. Jonathan Lear, "The Disappearing 'We' " in *Open Minded* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998): 288.
9. As suggested by Lear, *Open Minded,* 240; and John McDowell, "Wittgenstein on Following a Rule," in *Mind, Value and Reality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998): 258.
10. The topic of meaning-blindness and religion had been previously introduced in section 213 of *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, and *God* is mentioned in sections 139 and 198.
11. Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979): 34. For an account of the "difference of levels" between facts of nature and beliefs that presuppose or emerge from those facts, see McDowell, *Mind, Value and Reality,* 251.
12. "Cash value" is just the term Anscombe and von Wright use in section 287 of *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, translating "Auswertung": "It may also be reported: "The subject said 'I am tired' " – but the cash value of these words will depend on whether they are plausible, whether they were repeating what someone else said, whether they were a translation from the French, etc." Moral: it is natural to render certain Wittgenstein ideas in pragmatist terms.
13. Although, as Cavell points out, to a significant degree "we live our skepticism concerning other minds." See *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), Part 4; and my discussion in *American Philosophy and the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), Chapter 1.
14. Hilary Putnam, "The Meaning of 'Meaning'," in his *Mind, Language and Reality: Philosophical Papers, Vol. 2*, page 245.
15. Hilary Putnam, *The Many Faces of Realism* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1987): 12.
16. None of this is to say that Putnam would today give extension the prominent role it occupies in his accounts of the 1970s. As far as the extension of

a term such as "table" is concerned, if there is no metaphysical distinction to be drawn between "commonsense tables and chairs and sensations" on the one hand, and "electrons," on the other, if they are all "equally real," then the basis for thinking that "science" will determine the one correct extension of a term is undermined. A term like "chair," for example, is not *better* analyzed as a cloud of electrons than it is as something with a back on which to sit.

17. Cf. Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth, Philosophical Papers*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 3, and the section on "Putnam's Wittgensteinianism" in James Conant's Introduction (pp. xxxiv–lvii) to *Realism with a Human Face.* Richard Gale argues that Jamesean therapy relies on James's theory of meaning in *The Divided Self of William James*: 155 ff.
18. In *Varieties* he maintains that a science of religion will perform this mediating task, but in *Pragmatism* he associates this task not with the scientists, but with the philosopher, specifically with the pragmatist philosopher. Pragmatism, he writes, "is a method only," and "does not stand for any special results" (P: 31); pragmatism is "a mediating way of thinking" (P: 26).
19. John Dewey, "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy," in John J. McDermott, ed., *The Philosophy of John Dewey* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981): 95
20. Stanley Cavell, "What's the Use of Calling Emerson a Pragmatist?" in Morris Dickstein, ed., *The Revival of Pragmatism: New Essays on Social Thought, Law, and Culture* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1998): 73.
21. ". . . as opposed to the 'let's recognize a pre-existent continuity between science, art, politics, and religion' side." Richard Rorty, "Pragmatism without Method," in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth,* 64.
22. John Dewey, *Experience and Education,* 112.
23. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988): 358.
24. Cavell, "What's the Use of Calling Emerson a Pragmatist?", 74.
25. For further discussion of Cavell's criticisms of Dewey see my "Cavell and American Philosophy," in Russell B. Goodman, ed., *Stanley Cavell: The Philosopher Responds to His Critics* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, forthcoming).
26. Stanley Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say?* (New York and London: Cambridge University Press, 1976): 36 n. 10; and "What's the Use of Calling Emerson a Pragmatist?" 73.
27. See, for example, Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), and writings of Richard Rorty,

Hilary Putnam, and Cornel West collected in Russell B. Goodman, ed., *Pragmatism: A Contemporary Reader* (London: Routledge, 1995).

28. J. C. Nyíri, "Wittgenstein's Later Work in Relation to Conservatism," in Brian McGuinness, ed., *Wittgenstein and His Times* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982): 44–68.
29. Ibid., 46, quoting Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner. Nyíri cites Michael Oakeshott's statement that conservatives "delight in what is present rather than what was or what may be."
30. Ibid., 59.
31. G. H. Von Wright, "Wittgenstein in Relation to his Times," in McGuinness *Wittgenstein and His Times*, 115.
32. For the difficulties to which this characteristic emphasis leads, see Gale's discussions of "the alleged futurity of the past," in *The Divided Self of William James.*
33. Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 78.
34. Bertrand Russell, *Logical and Philosophical Papers, 1909–13* (*Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, vol. 6) (London and New York, Routledge, 1992): 283.
35. William James, *Memories and Studies* (New York and London: Longmans, Green, 1911): 290, 291.
36. One thinks of Dewey rather than James as the pragmatic advocate of social reorganization, yet, in this one case at least, Dewey was quite critical, writing that James's essay "seemed to me to show that even his sympathies were limited by his experience; the idea that most people need any substitute for fighting for life, or that they have to have life made artificially hard for them in order to keep up their battling nerve, could come only from a man who was brought up an aristocrat and who had lived a sheltered existence. I think he had no real intimation that the "labor problem" has always been for the great mass of people a much harder fight than any war; in fact one reason people are so ready to fight is the fact that that is so much easier than their ordinary existence." (Letter to Scudder Klyce, 1915, quoted in Myers, *William James, His Life and Thought*, 602).
37. William James, *Essays, Comments, and Reviews* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1987): 85.
38. Ibid., 86.
39. See Deborah J. Coon, "'One Moment in the World's Salvation': Anarchism and the Radicalization of William James," in *The Journal of American History*, June 1996: 70–99. In a 1900 letter to William Dean Howells, James wrote: "I am becoming more and more an individualist and anarchist" (Coon: 71).

40. Richard Poirier, *Poetry and Pragmatism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). On James as a conservative – particularly in contrast to Dewey – see Gale, *The Divided Self of William James*, 250.
41. Stanley Cavell, *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). See page xi and throughout for the claim that Wittgenstein is part of this tradition; for Dewey and James, see page 5.
42. Ibid., xxvii.
43. Stanley Cavell, "Finding as Founding: Taking Steps in Emerson's 'Experience'," in *This New Yet Unapproachable America: Lectures after Emerson after Wittgenstein* (Albuquerque, NM: Living Batch Press, 1989): 116.

Coda

1. M. O'C. Drury, "A Symposium," in K. T. Fann, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Man and His Philosophy* (New York: Dell, 1967): 68–9
2. William James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977): 64.
3. Ibid., 68. For "thickness" as used in contemporary ethical theory to apply to such terms as "treachery," "brutality," "courage," see Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), for example, page 129. The analyses of such thick terms by such writers as Philippa Foot and Williams owes much to Wittgenstein's later philosophy.
4. William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976): 24.
5. As I argue in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, the phenomena in question are psychological for James, but grammatical or logical for Wittgenstein.
6. Bruce Wilshire, *William James and Phenomenology: A Study of "The Principles of Psychology"* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1968 and New York: AMS Press, 1979); James Edie, *William James and Phenomenology* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987); Nicholas Gier, *Wittgenstein and Phenomenology* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1981). See Chapter 3.
7. For a defense of the view that the predominant theme in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* is an antipragmatic mysticism see Richard Gale, *The Divided Self of William James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
8. Cf. *The Principles of Psychology*, 1069–70, where James states: "Any classification of the emotions is seen to be as true and as 'natural' as any other, if it only serves some purpose"; cited in Chapter 4.

9. This is not to say that either Wittgenstein or James holds that "We make up the world." Both were aware, first, that our concepts have to "fit" or find their application within a world of nature and culture that often exhibits its independence of our interests; and second, that the human interests and purposes with which our categorizations are achieved are themselves parts of nature, and are in many cases quite broad and stable. There is this difference, though: James thinks of reality independent of human thinking as preconceptual, "absolutely dumb and evanescent, the merely ideal limit of our minds" (P: 119); whereas Wittgenstein thinks of the background against which our "concepts" and "grammar" form as constituted by "certain very general facts of nature" – which are not "dumb," but quite expressible (PI: p. 230). James states that the prehumanized core of experience is sensation, but holds that "the sensational" part of reality is "dumb," saying nothing about itself. "We it is who have to speak for them" (P: 118). Thanks to Stephen Affeldt for making this point about James.
10. Lear, *Open Minded*, 295. Cf. Wittgenstein on "logic as a normative science" in section 81 of *Philosophical Investigations.*
11. William James, "Humanism: Philosophical Essays," in *Essays, Comments, and Reviews* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987): 552.
12. Charles Sanders Peirce, "What Pragmatism Is," in *The Essential Peirce*, vol. 2, eds. Nathan Houser and Christian Kloesel (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998): 335.
13. For the notion of compensation I am using here, see Stanley Cavell, *Contesting Tears* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995): 198. On Dewey's sidestepping of skepticism see Goodman, *American Philosophy and the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 113. For Peirce's claim that most of what passes for skepticism is really only the pretense of skepticism, that we "cannot begin with complete doubt," see "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities," in *The Essential Peirce*, vol. 1, eds. Nathan Houser and Christian Kloesel (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992): 28 ff.
14. Henry James, ed., *The Letters of William James*, vol. 2 (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1920): 135. Reproduced in F. O. Matthiessen, *The James Family* (New York; Knopf, 1947).

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