

博士論文

ウィリアム・ジェイムズの思想における自己の概念と自伝の倫理

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IN THE THOUGHTS OF WILLIAM JAMES

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Introduction

As well known, the American psychologist William James (1842-1910), who established one of the landmark works in the history of psychology in the late nineteenth century. Moreover, he always had a strong interest in ethics, and this held true in his psychological research as well. Many biographers have shown how his thoughts were intertwined with his moral struggle in life. This thesis attempts to show how James developed his interest in ethics in the course of his psychological research starting from his study of science in the 1860's, to the beginning of the twentieth century. Reflecting on his psychology, he developed his pragmatism. Then, his ethical question was at the core with his other landmark work, *The Varieties of Religious Experiences* (1902).

In this process, the idea of the self had been the important subject of psychology; at the same time, his life crystallised alongside discoveries in experimental psychology and reflection on the mind. From this point of view, the impact of Darwin's evolutionary theory on James' conception became more and more apparent. He advanced psychological questions within this great paradigm shift of science. On the other hand, James' descriptive psychology continued to analyse subjective experiences such as experimental introspection, literary sources, and clinical case studies.

To pick examples of human experiences at different levels, the question on the concept of experience itself came to be James' central question by examining British empiricism. In this process, the description of experience in the first person became a key question from both the point of view of research and methodology. These intertwined interests led to his study of autobiographical texts in a wider context, mostly written by religious believers. He mentioned his interest in autobiographies in the letter to Henry Adams, an important author in the history of American autobiography through his *Education of Henry Adams* (1907). In this

work written in third person, he presented introspectively the negative and positive effect of the education he had received. And James wrote to Adams: “Autobiographies are my particular line of literature, the only books I let myself buy outside of metaphysical treatises, and that I have the most extraordinary longing to read yours in particular.”¹ In fact, James was, par excellence, a specialist of using autobiographical texts, in addition to his knowledge on literature and his training in introspection as a psychologist. Including episodes of his own experience, he examined the wide range of texts – from the records in experimental psychology to classical autobiographies in the religious tradition.

Therefore, in this thesis, we attempt to clarify how the epistemological investigation James had deepened through his psychology met with autobiographical texts: Autobiography was considered as the moral life of people in reference to religious ethics. Therefore, we attempt to show how psychological investigation opened to his ethical questions, on which he came later to advance his philosophical reflection, known as radical empiricism and pluralistic universe.

This process raises a problematic of language and experience: the difference between expression, description, re-description, explication, and explanation – and each of them are not independent for each other.² They question the relationship between subject and object, and then create the unbalanced relation under the control of the subject on the object. This relation mirrors the scientific knowledge and social norms of the time in its larger framework, and they also depend on the particularity of personal contexts. This theme reminds us of Michel Foucault’s phrase, “the self-relation to self [*souci de soi*].”³ On the one hand it pertains to the autobiographical relation *I* as author and *I* as living individual. On the other hand, it is a relation such as between philosophy and philosopher or between science and scientist. In order to examine how James dealt with this problem in his own thoughts, we start with the biographical aspects. In James’ voluminous

¹ Letters of WJ to Henry Adams, (Dec 7, 1907), *Corr. VI*, 489.

² My understanding on this problematic is mostly due to Wayne Proudfoot, *Religious Experience*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

³ Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité III: Le souci de soi* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), especially, Chapter 2 “Le culture de soi.”

correspondences, it is obvious that he always was interested in the life of authors beyond their works. He lived in the wide international network of intellectuals and the thick familial ties and the familial relations with other established families in Boston and Cambridge. Living within these human relations, philosophy could not be separated from the author's life. Therefore he looked into the metaphysical explanation of the subjectivity, considered as a purely logical reflection, and he tried to discover this intertwined relationship between scientific objectivity and scientist's subjectivity. In fact, the scientist's notebooks of observation and his diaries are one way of verifying and confirming his life. Needless to say, intellectual reflection is not possible without individual thinkers, it is this which constituted James' point of view about thinking and sciences as human projects.

To begin with my inquiry into James' thought, I would like to clarify the ethical aspects of the autobiography in society. Writing about the history of personal lives raises public interest today. We find evidence of the diversity of this literary genre in a number of publications of autobiographies and biographies, including novels, diaries, documentaries, oral history by historians, ethnography and diaries of sicknesses, testimonies of wars and natural catastrophes. In addition, there are various ways to express them, such as multimedia, videos, audio recordings as well as texts. This situation could expose the private life of the writer, therefore the moral question that presents itself here is about differences between the truth for an individual, and the social and historical facts. Another aspect of moral question is about how one can be responsible for one's writing. To think about the problems of the practice of writing about life opens possibilities for new interpretations of the moral aspect of autobiography. Paul John Earkin demonstrates that the truth for the author does not always correspond with opinions shared by the public; that this exposure of private life changes the reputation of the author before. But at the same time, authors are often motivated by their moral conscience.⁴ For example, people who make testimonies of a tragic event mention their responsibility to transmit the historical truth to following generations by communicating their own

⁴ Paul John Earkin, ed. *The Ethics of Life Writing*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004).

experiences, which often contradict the official narrative of history.

Concerning the traditional biography in the West written in the first person narrative, which finds its origin in *The Confession of Saint Augustine*, it is conceived, in general, as a developed narrative form based on the establishment of religious beliefs following a conversion from another belief system such as paganism. Following this tradition, the modern autobiography is interpreted as an instrument, which permits the author to establish himself as a moral subject while searching for his own identity. Another original model is the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, including his *The Confessions* and *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*. Analyzing about Rousseau's writings with regard to the first person narrative, Jean Starobinski said that Rousseau manifests not only his innocence but also shows how "the events of his consciousness and his personal life had an absolute importance and without being prince nor bishop nor superintendent of finances, he had non the less right to ask for universal attention. The social meaning of the very enterprise of *The Confessions* is not to be ignored: Jean-Jacques wants to be recognized: not only as an exceptional soul, not only as an victim with pure heart, but also as a simple man and foreigner without the novelty titles, who will be more capable to give universally valid image of man."⁵ According to Starobinski, Rousseau insisted that justice and truth are the same thing, therefore the Hegelian terminology "struggle for recognition" does not only appear in the court before the judge, but characterizes also everyday life.

The communitarian Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor understood the politics of recognition following Rousseau's ideal of sincerity. According to Taylor, Rousseau's moral ideal of sincerity also attracted intellectuals at the latter half of the nineteenth century. He analysed James' "individualism" though his model of sick souls used in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Taylor understood the conflicts of sick souls as cases of religious melancholy due to their hesitation to believe or not to believe in a religious truth. Taylor advanced then to explain that a character of modern self has been formed through this struggling for self-image. In

⁵ Jean Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau : la transparence et l'obstacle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 222.

the process of modernisation, skepticism on religious tradition grew, as a result emotional experiences such as melancholy began to be lost its religious meaning. However another ideal of “sincerity” that is also rooted in Christian tradition was formed to succeed a role of giving a meaning to melancholy: it helps to express one’s own sins through his/her words and actions.⁶ The “sincerity” means how to be faithful to a particular way of being oneself. According to Taylor, this ideal of sincerity was appeared through the literary expressionism in the eighteenth century then developed as the ideal of “authenticity.” Taylor understood this “authenticity” became as a widely shared ideal in the modern society beyond the intellectual community.⁷

The late twentieth century thinking has critiqued modern notions pertaining to subjectivity. The discussion regarding the “linguistic turn” brought about by analytical philosophy has revealed the public dimension of narratives written in the first person. The Foucauldian subject, postcolonial studies, and especially “subaltern studies”, have presented the composition of the subject in terms of power relations in the modern social system.⁸ According to these critiques, the “I” referring to the author of autobiography is no longer evident. With this interpretation of autobiography, it would not be possible to write about oneself under the ideological oppression of the colonizer. Still, the subject “I” is not completely the representation of the other. From this point of view, autobiography is no longer the method to adapt oneself to established society but rather a reaction against integration to the traditional norms.

⁶ Charles Taylor, *Varieties of religion today: William James revisited* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002).

⁷ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. New Ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1992). And also Charles Taylor, *The ethics of authenticity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

⁸ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. *Can the subaltern speak?* (Urbana : University of Illinois Press, 1988).

Chapter 1: Diaries and Letters from the 1860s to the Early 1870s: Educational Journeys and Approach to the Theory of Evolution

William James took a peculiar zigzag route to starting his professorial career at Harvard in the early 1870s, and the decisions he took throughout his life preclude a linear explanation for his professional itinerary. He grew up under his father's view of natural theology and wrestled with Henry James Sr's desire to decide about his son's vocation. After first attempting to become a painter, William studied various areas of the natural sciences and then medicine, and these endeavours took him to a range of different countries and environments to which he was again and again forced to adapt.

Although William never wrote an autobiography per se, his various struggles were faithfully recorded in the letters and diaries he wrote throughout his life. These documents have attracted researchers of his life and work to examine his biographical background for early signs of his future as an influential philosopher and psychologist. From this point of view, Howard M. Feinstein's inspiringly titled biography, *Becoming William James*,¹ which describes William in the context of three generations of Jameses and, laterally, alongside his siblings, is a landmark interpretation of his life. Feinstein employs psychoanalytical methods to interpret William's struggle for self-actualisation in the face of an affectionate but sometimes domineering father. He also pays close attention to other members of the James family, especially the two younger brothers and a sister who have often been left in the shadow of the more famous William and Henry. The family's long periods of travel abroad served to strengthen its ties, and William's experience in the social and historical context is intimately related to that of the rest of his family. Their

¹ Howard M. Feinstein, *Becoming William James* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000).

relationship with their father was of central concern to all the James children, but William appears to have made much more effort than the others to understand Henry Sr as a philosopher, which may be why he seems to have had more trouble than they did in settling upon a vocation.

Alongside his home life, two important social and historical events are also considered to have had a major impact on William James's later thoughts: the 1861-65 American Civil War, and Charles Darwin's 1859 publication of *The Origin of Species*.² Although many young men of William's generation (including two of his brothers) went to fight in the war, William himself experienced it only from a distance. But this did not leave him unmoved by its ravages; it may be that his feelings about the war and the effect it had on him intellectually were intensified by his sense of alienation from the relatives and friends who went to battle without him. As for Darwin, although William's intellectual journey started without any knowledge of evolutionary theory and even before the theory was developed, Louis Menand called him "truer to Darwin than most nineteenth-century evolutionists,"³ not in the sense of being a dogmatic follower but as an admirer of Darwin's ideas,⁴ and William James' scientific exploration expanded alongside the rapid development of evolutionary theory.

Re-examining William's diaries and letters and some of his family's texts, most of which have already been analysed by his biographers, this chapter attempts first to follow his approach to unfamiliar places and new knowledge through his own interests and then to examine the epistemologically skeptical attitude he developed through the process of continually making acquaintance with new things. The latter part of this chapter will examine how James found himself within the natural environment that surrounded him: in other words, how he worked to place

² Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: John Murray, 1859).

³ Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club* (2000; repr., London: Flamingo, 2001), 141.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 141. Hofstadter also evaluates James's Darwinism as different from social Darwinism in American society in the second half of the nineteenth century, which overlapped 'the struggle for existence' with competitive logic in the market in the vision of social progress: "James seems to be out-individualising the individualists, but in the larger context of his thought it appears that his main concern was to redeem spontaneity and indeterminacy from the oppressive causal network of Spencerian social evolution." Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (1944; repr., Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 133.

himself and his own subjectivity within the framework of the present moment, and how he understood the relationship between mind and nature in his early period.

1.1 The Educational Odyssey

The education of his children in a suitable and stimulating environment was of paramount importance to Henry James Sr, who also strove to provide them with a foundation in the particular activities for which they showed aptitude and interest. To this end, the family travelled a great deal. They left New York for Europe in 1855 and stayed there (in London, Paris, Boulogne-sur-Mer, Geneva and Bonn) until 1860, apart from a temporary return to America, also for educational reasons.

The family often looked back upon this period of travel as a somewhat confusing time because it gave them a disturbing sense of uprootedness. However, their travelling forced them to experience their surroundings passively and it trained them to observe and analyse unfamiliar things. The result, for William at least, was fruitful, providing him with a variety of experiences that would serve him well throughout his life. His brother Henry recalled the family's experiences in Paris, especially their visit to the Louvre just after their arrival in 1855, as mirroring their standpoint between America and Europe:

I had looked at pictures, looked and looked again, at the vast Veronese, at Murillo's Moon-borne Madonna, at Leonardo's almost unholy dame with the folded hands, treasures of the Salon Carré as that display was then composed; but I had also looked at France and looked at Europe, looked even at America as Europe itself might be conceived so to look, looked at history, as a still-felt past and a complacently personal future, at society, manners, type, characters, possibilities and prodigies and mysteries of fifty sorts.⁵

⁵ *SBO*, 199.

The young Jameses were exposed to the work of great artists without having “that perfection of slang” with which to describe and understand them. Henry saw this not only as a passive experience but also as the ambiguously “vague process” of education: while his brothers were “picking up” an education from seeing the works and the exhibitions, they were also examining the foundations of education itself. Hence, they learnt not only to observe the images before them, as it were, but also to absorb as well as react to them. As Henry wrote, “We weren’t little asses, but something wholly other.”⁶ Even if these comments were the afterthoughts of an established writer, Henry recalled the feelings he described as being shared by his brother William. According to Henry, the two boys noticed the unilateral and imposing manner in which the museum educated observers to see the world in a particular way. It seems remarkable that Henry wanted to put into words the obscure feeling they shared of being fascinated with the outer world while simultaneously having a spontaneous reaction of uncertainty towards it.

Of the painters whose works they saw, the boys were particularly impressed by the French Romantic painter Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863), who portrayed intense historical battle scenes, often in their prelude or aftermath. Henry wrote of the Louvre as containing “the ineffable, the inscrutable, and Delacroix in especial with the incalculable; categories these toward which we had even then, by a happy transition, begun to yearn and languish.”⁷ William studied the paintings intently, attempting to learn the form of Delacroix’s every brush stroke and later to reproduce them from memory.

For much of his early life, William James was attracted to the vocation of an artist and hoped to become a professional painter. His decision to pursue this career was made after long reflection, as his father, who wanted him to be a scientist, disapproved of it. Some biographers have described this as a time of conflict between an excessively controlling father and a son’s struggle to find his own way.⁸ Nonetheless, the family returned to America for William to study art under the American painter William Morris Hunt (1824-1879) at Newport. But after a short

⁶ *Ibid*, 199.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁸ See especially the works of Perry 1935, Cotkin 1994, and Feinstein 2000.

time, Henry Sr, who worried about the sort of unfavourable moral influence that Hunt might have on his son, decided to leave again for Europe. This time the family settled in Geneva, where William and Henry attended the Swiss Federal Polytechnic School in Zurich to study mathematics and science. However, William did not have to abandon the idea of becoming a painter. While he was in Bonn, where the brothers went to study German, he again persuaded his father in Paris to allow him to pursue his dream.

Feinstein looks at some of William's drawings from those years in an attempt to make a psychological analysis of his struggle, inferring a preference for Delacroix from the preoccupation with violence that was evident in James's drawings. For example, Feinstein says, Delacroix depicted a lot of "rapacious attacks by animals" while William constructed similarly violent scenes depicting the "frightening power of one enraged creature trying to destroy another"⁹: for example, a lion biting a giraffe, hunters being chased by an elephant, or a bear and a human engaged in mortal combat.

Feinstein sees in these compositions of rage and vulnerability the "unconscious resonance" of a tendency towards melancholic depression that William shared with Delacroix in his struggle to be a painter.¹⁰ William seemed to identify with both the attacker and the attacked; in fact, these two aspects are often so entangled in his paintings that it is not always easy to say which is which. This may relate to the turmoil he was experiencing in opposing his father's wishes whilst simultaneously being unsure that he was making the right decision.

In spite of William's turmoil, Giles Gunn has pointed out that Henry Sr was agreeable to his son devoting himself to painting if it was what he really wanted to do. His main concern was that William would not indulge in purely aesthetic pursuits that might endanger his spiritual and moral wellbeing. In fact, according to Gunn, Henry James Sr saw "the aesthetic person as someone who, possessing a specific talent, seeks to fulfil it by following the laws of his or her own inward nature, laws that Henry, Senior, assumed to be universal to the nature of all human

⁹ Feinstein, 111.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 111.

beings.”¹¹ As Gunn also said, Henry Sr did not explicitly outline this vision to his son in support of his choice.¹² But for William, the problem was not only the pursuit of his father’s agreement. In a letter from Bonn in August 1860, he questioned his father’s vision of an artistic as opposed to a spiritual life, insisting upon the similarities between the two whilst apparently demonstrating some misunderstanding of Henry Sr’s opinion:

I don’t see why a man’s spiritual culture should not go on independently of his aesthetic activity, why the power which an artist feels in himself should tempt him to forget what he is, any more than the power felt by Cuvier or Fourier would tempt them to do the same. Why should not a given susceptibility of religious development be found bound up in a mind whose predominant tendencies are artistic, as well as in one largely intellectual granting, even, that the former be much the most elementary, the least dignified and useful?¹³

William James insisted here that a talented artist could pursue his artistic development in relation to his religious sentiments; that is to say, he considered it possible to realise a spiritual wholeness through the pursuit of the aesthetic. It was, in fact, not far from Henry Sr’s own vision. Still, this was only the beginning of William’s ongoing effort to understand the elder James’ theological views, with which he felt he could not agree. He never abandoned this effort, even though he sometimes wanted to maintain a distance from his father, as did the other James children.

A few weeks later, in September 1861, as a result of a long discussion between father and son, the James family finally returned to America. William resumed his study with Hunt at his painting school in Newport, where William also met and

¹¹ Giles Gunn, *Beyond Solidarity: Pragmatism and Difference in a Globalized World* (University of Chicago Press, 2001), 63.

¹² Giles Gunn, *The correspondence of William James*, Vol. IV (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), Introduction, xxvii.

¹³ Letter of WJ to HJ Sr. (August 24, 1860), *Corr. IV*, 40.

became friends with John La Farge (1835-1910), who was to become a famous painter. With his comrades he learnt to paint passionately, but this did not mean that he was no longer disturbed by the question of his vocation. Despite the involvement of his entire family (his brothers also learnt painting), after almost half a year William himself put an abrupt end to his first vocational challenge. His father's smouldering disapproval was certainly one of the reasons for this, but ultimately it was because William evaluated his own talent as inadequate, failing to allow him to reach his own high standards and dedicate himself wholeheartedly to the pursuit of aesthetics. It seems that he came to share in part his father's unease about the necessary selfishness of an artist at the same time as realizing that he did not have sufficient artistic "genius" to accomplish his high ideals.

On William's failed attempt to become a painter, Ralph Barton Perry surmises, "The vocational experiment was a complete success in the sense that it was altogether decisive," and explains its ongoing effect on James' later professional life: "He retained the painter's sensibility, and something of the artist's detachment. He cultivated style in his scientific and philosophical writing, and was offended by its absence in others. He allowed himself the artist's license." Painting should allow the development of an artist's power of description, beginning with the passive-but-active state earlier described by William's brother Henry in the Louvre. Perry wrote of William: "When a theme took him, it possessed him," and "his descriptions of people were like his father's portraits, in which he expressed some tonality of life which the subject conveyed him. Hence when he was most personal he was often most impersonal. He indulged his moods because they were intuitive, and most impersonal."¹⁴

Perry's insight is pertinent. William certainly took steps to be able to confront Henry Sr, not only as a father but also as a thinker whose understanding was based on monotheistic theology and ethics. But it took him a very long time to discern any affinity between their thoughts, and in the following period, during his study of natural science, William was again to challenge his father's views.

Furthermore, Perry believed that William's training in painting taught him to

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 201.

see “the landscape with a painter’s eye and the artist’s sense of plastic form.”¹⁵ It is possible to emphasize this: William did not seek to achieve realism in painting for the sake of reproducing images; the images made by a painter exist only as a result of the artist’s reaction to the scene he seeks to depict, as Feinstein made clear in his psychological analysis. Once again, one of the most influential results of the educational odyssey, especially in the family’s travels up until 1860, was that it forged in William a habit of seeking the ambiguity between seeing and being seen; in other words, the interaction of subject and object constituting an individual experience for each. At the same time, as we have seen with the memories of Henry James, it is not possible to reduce William’s sentiments and reflections to his own individuality. They were talked about and shared within the family, and it is often impossible to ascertain whether a person is the sole proprietor of his memories.

1.2 Romance and Hesitation in Scientific Studies

In September 1861, William James entered the Lawrence Scientific School to carry out a plan he had conceived of before his experiment with painting. His curiosity about natural history was already recorded clearly in an 1858 letter he wrote to Edgar Beach Van Winkle, a childhood friend who was born in the same year as William and lived on the same street in Manhattan, describing how he would like his choice of profession to be “useful”:

I would get a microscope and go out into the country, into the dear old woods and fields and ponds. There I would try to make as many discoveries as possible – and I’ll be kicked if I would not be more useful than if I’d laid out railroads by rules which others had made and which I had learnt from them. If in the former case I do not vindicate my existence better than in the latter, then I’m no man. I’ll tell you what I think I’ll do. I’ll be a farmer and do as much good in the natural history line as I can. How much that is, God

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 201

only knows. I pray that I may do something.¹⁶

The Lawrence Scientific School was founded in 1847 in Cambridge, Massachusetts with a \$50,000 donation from Massachusetts industrialist and entrepreneur Abbott Lawrence (1792-1855), for the purpose of establishing an education in the practical applications of the sciences. Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), one of the founders of Pragmatism, had studied there a few years before William's arrival, and this school offered opportunities for young Bostonians to study under the instruction of eminent scientists. By the time of William's enrolment, the school was still loosely organised, without the need for an entrance examination. It was not incorporated into the Harvard colleges until the reformation that was undertaken towards the end of the 19th century by the chemist Charles William Eliot (1834-1926), James's first teacher at the school and an acquaintance of his father's.¹⁷ William's decision to study chemistry under Eliot came as no surprise to Henry, who recalled his brother's enthusiasm for:

... 'experiments' and the consumption of chemicals, the transfusion of mysterious liquids from glass to glass under exposure to lambent flame, the cultivation of stained fingers, the establishment and the transport, in our wanderings of galvanic batteries, the administration to all he could persuade of electric shocks, the maintenance of marine animals in splashy aquaria, the practice of photography in the room I for a while shared with him at Boulogne, with every stern reality of big cumbrous camera, prolonged exposure, exposure mostly myself, darkened development, also interminable, and ubiquitous brown blot. Then there had been also the constant, as I fearfully felt it, the finely speculative and boldly disinterested absorption of curious drugs.¹⁸

¹⁶ Letter of WJ to Edgar Beach Van Winkle, (March 1, 1858), *TCWJI*, 15.

¹⁷ The Lawrence Scientific School was the origin of today's Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

¹⁸ Henry James, *NSB*, 308.

As Perry commented, another of William's tendencies was to be "eagerly but impatiently interested."¹⁹ He studied hard, but learning chemistry could not hold his interest for long enough to make a professional chemist of him. Eliot himself noted two determining aspects of William James' prior education: "First, its irregularity — it did not conform to the Boston and Cambridge traditional method; and secondly, it was in large proportion observational, and particularly in the biological sciences. The systematic part of his education did not foretell his subsequent devotion to philosophical studies; but his unsystematic excursions did."²⁰

Here is a hint of negativity on the subject of James' caprice. Having observed William's preferences, Eliot had even chosen a theme to fit with his interest: exploring the effects of an acid phosphate on the kidney through self-experimentation, by eating bread fermented with material containing this substance. But the experiment made him unwell, and finally William ended it and abandoned his study of chemistry. He complained that he found the subject monotonous, and indeed, exposing himself to the acid phosphate had not given him much understanding of how it worked. However the real reason for his dismissal of chemistry as a profession is not clear. According to William's letters from this period, it was firstly because of his desire for financial independence — at the time the future of scientists was not institutionally assured — and his mother's unease about her son's apparent wastefulness seems to have made him hasten to resolve this problem. Secondly, an administrative reason not mentioned in James's biographies was that Eliot also left the school that year. The discipline of chemistry had come to be regarded as outdated and unscientific, so Eliot's contract was not renewed at the end of that term.

In any case, there had been some disharmony between Eliot's teaching and William's curiosity. What William found monotonous about learning chemistry was what he perceived as a naïve dualism between the scientific observer and nature as object, which contrasted with what he had learnt in his earlier education. Eliot's

¹⁹ *TCWJI*, 206.

²⁰ Cited in *TCWJI*, 207.

vision of nature helps to illustrate some fragments of this problem. Although he did not have much formal scientific training, as a young man he had been allowed to volunteer at a small laboratory run by the chemist and mineralogist Josiah Parsons Cooke (1827-1894), who was also a self-educated scientist. Eliot learnt chemistry through this laboratory work alongside his work tutoring mathematics and chemistry at Harvard. He rejoiced in the fact that Cooke and his assistant Francis H. Storer (1832-1914) had gone trekking along a wide range of the north-east coast of America: “Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, parts of Quebec, New York State, New Jersey, and some of the Pennsylvania mining regions, not to speak of parts of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and the Berkshires of their own State....”²¹ The purpose of this was the field study of geology and the inspection of mines and other industrial factories, as well as collecting minerals for Harvard. They moved through the mountains on foot, using a hammer and other rudimentary tools to extract the materials they collected.

In contemporary America, nature was seen to exist in terms of its relationship with people – it was something to be loved or something to be dominated. Eliot’s biographer Henry James III (the son of William James) pointed to his subject’s “romantic” enjoyment of the landscape by quoting Eliot as follows: “Some natural objects, like a fine standard history, seem great enough for everybody to study and enjoy, but there is another sort of scenery which is more like a letter from an intimate friend; you enjoy it all the more because you feel that it was intended for you alone, and know that no one else has ever read it.”²²

Despite Eliot’s personal feeling of intimacy with nature, this framework seems to be a dualistic vision that also sees nature as an object existing outwardly to its discoverers. His scientific comments are suggestive; on the one hand he sees nature as an object of scientific knowledge open to everyone, on the other hand it can be perceived only through personal and subjective experience. This may result in confusion between the pursuit of universality and the “romantic” excitement of particularity. In fact, this combination in the activities of naturalists characterised

²¹ Henry James III, *Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard University, 1869-1909*, vol.I (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1930), 54.

²² *Ibid.*, 54.

natural history as a science that was progressing rapidly in time with the territorial expansionism of the patronal state.²³ In other words, the research activities of naturalists at the time were generally not separable from the ideology of American expansionism. If this movement was promoted by the vision of the west as a ‘virgin land’ that would furnish the collection of new specimens, naturalists had to advance into previously unexplored areas in order to place them on the natural sciences map. As naturalists walk around fields on foot and with hammers, it is possible to understand their activities within the logic of the western expansion into America through cultivation by individual scientists.²⁴

Although William soon came to confront his unexpected aversion to the study of chemistry, he rather prepared for his next choice by trying to acquire different viewpoints on the study of science rather than abandoning it. As a result, after his long journey in Europe, he left again to pursue one project after another within America. Meanwhile, the James family’s reinstallation in America almost coincided with the outbreak of the Civil War— a major turning point for William as well as for the society that surrounded him.

1.3 Civil War, Boston and Brothers

When James took his absence from the Lawrence Scientific School in early 1863, people close to him were beginning to head for the battlefields of the Civil War. Charles Eliot finished up his term and left Harvard to participate in the war as a Lieutenant-Colonel of Cavalry, a post offered to him by the 25th Governor of

²³ For example, the range of Cuvier’s fieldwork was enlarged geographically by the territorial acquisition of Napoleon’s conquest. Peter J. Bowler, *Evolution: The History of an Idea. 25th Anniversary Edition* (Berkeley, LA and London: The University of California Press, 2009). Browne explains that the geographical research brought by British expeditions was basically tied with colonial interests, therefore its representations of nature was basically conditioned by political situations permitting the access to the field. Janet Browne, “Biogeography and Empire,” in Nicholas Jardine, James A. Secord and Emma C. Spary, *Cultures of Natural History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²⁴ Cf. Maria Helena Pereira Toledo Machado, *Brazil through the Eyes of William James: Diaries, Letters, and Drawings, 1865-1866*. Bilingual ed (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, 2006), 17.

Massachusetts, John Albion Andrew (1818-1867). In fact, Eliot had already engaged in supporting the North through his administrative job as well as his academic work. After the opening of fire on Fort Sumter in South Carolina in April 1861, he rendered his knowledge of science to the war effort, even planning for the Lawrence Scientific School to take part as a place for the technical training of officers, as well as offering its other students some basic military drills.²⁵ But now he also had to confront the misery of battle. In a letter Eliot wrote to a cousin during a Europe trip, his description of the country repainted the romantic landscape that he had been able to embrace in the preceding years:

Last and worse, the defeat near Manassas made everybody here feel perfectly down-hearted and miserable. The horrible fact was that Yankee officers and men had run, fled in utter confusion when there was no pursuit, and the battle was two thirds won. The actual loss in killed and wounded was of no account beside this ignominious panic. Our Massachusetts [men] behaved no better than the rest... People are too impatient — everybody talks of a short war, one year, two years at the outside. I say ten years if necessary — fight it out now once for all, dig up the root of the evil and let us know whether a great Republic can or cannot carry on successful war in defense of her life and honor. I believe it can and will be done...²⁶

As the war intensified, increasing numbers of young people became involved. However, the Lawrence School continued as usual for a while, with the registration numbers of new freshmen not falling considerably until 1864. Still uncertain about his future, James had suspended his chemistry studies in favour of a new course of study at the medical school. The documents that we can consult from this period are few, with the exception of some family correspondence. So far as they tell us, besides his satisfaction with learning medicine, he was preoccupied with the welfare of the young people he knew who had gone to war, especially his younger brothers

²⁵ Henry James III, 89.

²⁶ Letter to Theodore Lyman, Eliot's cousin, (Aug 5, 1861), cited in *Ibid.*, 93.

Wilkinson and Robertson (known as Wilky and Bob).

When the James family first returned to Newport, the two younger boys had entered Sanborn School in Concord, Massachusetts, an abolitionist school linked to the militant abolitionist John Brown (1800-1859), who had been tried for treason and hanged in 1859 for his fight against slavery. With the encouragement of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Frank Benjamin Sanborn (1831-1917) founded this school with other five other Bostonians who supported Emerson's abolitionist activities even before having met him.²⁷ Because of their long absence from America, the James parents were not fully aware of the school's politics, but the two younger Jameses, away from home, were so deeply influenced by its atmosphere that they volunteered for the Union Army. Wilkinson, who stayed at Sanborn longer than his younger brother, enlisted in the 44th Massachusetts Regiment in 1862 at the age of seventeen. A year later he became an officer of one of the first black regiments,²⁸ the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, led by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw (1837-1863). In the same year, sixteen-year-old Robertson, who yearned to follow his brother, enlisted to a second black regiment, the 55th Massachusetts Regiment.

Henry Sr, who agreed with anti-slavery and supported the Union's cause,²⁹ was proud of his younger sons' sense of moral duty and participation in the war, even though he found their departure so young to be "heart-breaking." But he had different ideas for William and Henry. Henry Sr wrote, "I have had a firm grasp upon the coat tails of my Willy and Henry, who both vituperate me beyond measure because I won't let them go." His reasons for this seem contradictory in relation to his younger sons: "First, that no existing government, is worth an honest human life and a clean one like theirs.... Secondly, I tell them that no young American should put himself in the way of death, until he has realized something of the good life;

²⁷ Including Sanborn, the Reverend Theodore Parker, Dr Samuel Gridley Howe, Gerrit Smith, the Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson and George Luther Stearns. Together they were known as the Secret Six, a cell for Brown's aid project for freed slaves. Cf. *BWJ*, 254-257.

²⁸ The soldiers, recruited by white abolitionists, were freed slaves who volunteered to join the army in the fight against slavery. The black regiments were all led by white officers.

²⁹ Cf. the oration of Henry James Sr. at Newport; Henry James Sr., *The Social Significance of Our Institutions: An Oration Delivered by Request of the Citizens at Newport, RI, July 4th, 1861* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1861).

until he has found some charming conjugal Elizabeth or other to whisper his devotion to, and assume the task, if need be, of keeping his memory green.”³⁰

It is not evident how his father reacted when William’s name appeared on the enrolment list for the state militia in Newport in 1863.³¹ However, William did not enlist, and biographers have discussed the degree to which Henry Sr influenced this outcome. George Cotkin surmised three other possible reasons for William’s non-participation: firstly, his health might not have been strong enough (he had been absent from his studies since the spring term that year due to nervous strain and indigestion); secondly, his irresolute tendency might have prevented him from making up his mind about the commitment required for war;³² and finally, as Perry noted, William’s interest in public affairs and politics was not yet matured in this period.³³ Whatever the reason, he never participated alongside his two young brothers and so many others of his generation.³⁴

William later revisited his feelings at the march of the 54th Regiment — it was led by Shaw, and Wilky was also there — in Boston on 28 May 1863, as follows: “I looked back and saw their faces and figures against the evening sky, and they looked so young and victorious that I, much gnawed by questions as to my own duty of enlisting or not, shrank back — they had not seen me — from being recognized. I shall never forget the impression they made.”³⁵

To William’s mind there was more reason to be impressed by the brave figures because their fight was twofold: the black regiments faced strong opposition in the North because of prejudice against black people and antipathy about fighting at such high cost to free slaves, and some even considered that the Union army should be protected from fighting for blacks and including them among its ranks. Therefore,

³⁰ Cited in George Cotkin, *William James: Public Philosopher* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 31.

³¹ The conscription law enacted in March 1863 demanded all male citizens aged 20 to 30 and unmarried men to 45 to be enrolled for the draft.

³² Cotkin, 31.

³³ *TCWJI*, 203

³⁴ Contradicting James’s feeling of being left alone as described by many biographers, according to Richardson, “Of the 776,829 names called up in the three national drafts of 1863 and 1864, only 46,347 men were held for military service, or about one out of sixteen,” even though the percentage was up to 10.5 percent. *WJMA*, 55.

³⁵ *WJMA*, 55, letter to Shaw’s niece, cited from Ferris Greenslet, *The Lowells and Their Seven Worlds* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946), 288-89.

the black regiments were the target of much hostility, such as the lynchings that took place during the New York City Draft Riot after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863.³⁶ Robertson wrote about an attack by anti-draft mobs in Boston, and Wilky noted of the march in Boston, where William had looked on at Shaw's regiment, that "prejudice of the rankest sort then assailed us" and the regiment had to advance amidst "the alternating cheers and groans, the alternate huzza and reproach which attempted to deafen each other on our march down State Street."³⁷

Richardson also collected records that imply William's reaction to the war. First, an entry in William's account book that shows how he, studying hard in his second year of chemistry, went at least seven times by train to see Wilky, who was in training at Camp Meigs (south of Boston in Massachusetts), before his departure in October 1862.³⁸ Second, soon after the Emancipation Proclamation, William and Henry applied for education support for the recently released slaves in Port Royal, South Carolina, where the Union Army had stayed.³⁹ In fact there is no record of their actual participation in this support program, and it seems that William was simply trying to perform his duty in another way than by going to battle.

In July 1863, the 54th Regiment spearheaded an assault on the Confederate-held Fort Wagner. Even though the attack did not succeed, the courageous fighting of the black soldiers in this dangerous battle gained them a reputation for bravery. But their commander Colonel Shaw was killed, Wilky was badly injured on the side of his body and on his leg. He barely managed to survive, and he was found by chance in the Sanitary Commission by his friend's father, who had come in search of his own son (who had been killed in another attack just before Fort Wagner).⁴⁰ Wilky was sent home to recover, lamenting the death of his comrades and suffering from trauma. He spoke with difficulty of what he had seen

³⁶ http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/transcript.html (accessed March 30, 2013)

³⁷ Cited in Feinstein, 263, cf. *TCWJI*, 231, 238.

³⁸ *WJMA*, 52.

³⁹ They met a Harvard professor, Francis Child, organiser of the new Boston Educational Commission's Committee on Correspondence at Port Royal in South Carolina. *WJMA*, 51.

⁴⁰ Russell Cabot Jackson (1844-1863) was appointed as an officer of the 54th regiment at the same time as Wilkinson.

and experienced, and Henry Sr listened and transcribed his words:

I woke up lying in the sand under my tent and slowly recalled all that had happened, my wounds, my fall, the two men that tried to drag me to the rear, their fall one after the other, my feeble crawling to the ambulance — when memory slept, and I here woke to find myself apparently forgotten of all the world, and sick and faint for loss of blood. As I lay ignorant of all that had happened meanwhile and wondering whether I should ever see my home again, a groan beside me arrested my attention, and turning my head I discerned by the dim camp a poor Ohio man with his jaw shot away, who finding that I was near to him and unable to move, crept over on me and deluged me with his blood. At that I felt —.⁴¹

The father noted that his son couldn't speak any further, but in spite of everything, Wilky strongly desired to rejoin his regiment as soon as possible. William's other brother, Henry, probably shared his experiences of the war with his family too, but we cannot follow their conversation because there is a lack of letters from this period, although Henry did write a short story about a colonel who had survived the 1868 war.⁴²

The war raised many moral questions, not least because it contradicted its own outcome. As Wilky later put it, "the whole tragedy was a totally inconsistent military maneuver."⁴³ In the Civil War, sometimes described as the first 'modern' war, suicidal attacks were demanded in battle. The soldiers were issued with new rifles but they were mostly volunteer citizen-soldiers who had only been trained to use the old-style musket guns. The captain of the 20th Regiment, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr (1841-1935), who also survived fierce battles in the war, later stated that the battlefield was for a place for "certain and useless death." Although he went

⁴¹ *WJMA*, 147; Jane Maher, *Biography of Broken Fortunes: Wilkie and Bob; Brothers of William, Henry and Alice James* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1986), 49-50.

⁴² Henry James, "A Most Extraordinary Case", *Atlantic Monthly* 21, (April 1868): 461-485

⁴³ Wilkinson's article in *Milwaukee Sentinel*, December 2, 1888. The article is cited in Feinstein, 266.

on to a long and successful career as a chief justice at the Supreme Court, he lived with bitter memories of having to force his regiments to fight with outdated and unsophisticated methods.⁴⁴

Just few months before Fort Wagner, William James lost a cousin on his father's side, Willy Temple, in the war; the two had been born in the same year. Now, faced with his badly injured brother, he drew a picture of Wilky asleep at their parents' house in Newport, depicting the fragile state between life and death with his brother's wasted face at the center of the frame, without the dramatisation so often seen in his drawings.⁴⁵ Compared with another picture — drawn around five years earlier — of a sleeping Wilky lying in bed after having been bitten by a serpent, it seems that William reflected more closely on the realities of the battlefield as a result of the condition of his wounded brother. In the earlier picture, William had poked fun at Wilky with the caption "GW James hard at work (reading)". But there was no space for light-hearted joking about what had happened to Wilky and his regiment. The war was not just another reckless adventure. Here in Newport, far from the distant reality of the battlegrounds, William was being confronted with the weighty silence of his dead cousin and his deathly sleeping brother.

Thirty-four years later, on the May 1897 Decoration Day, William spoke about the Fort Wagner battle in a speech at the unveiling of a memorial on Boston Common for Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment:

The men who do brave deeds are usually unconscious of their picturesqueness. For two nights previous to the assault upon Fort Wagner the 54th Massachusetts Regiment had been afoot, making forced marches in the rain; and on the day of the battle the men had had no food since early

⁴⁴ Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr, "In Our Youth Our Hearts Were Touched With Fire" (an address delivered for Memorial Day, May 30, 1884, at NH. Keene, before John Sedgwick Post No 4, Grand Army of the Republic). <http://people.virginia.edu/~mmd5f/memorial.htm>.

⁴⁵ William James. *Recovering from wounds suffered at Fort Wagner*. <http://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Pajares/jsketches.html> (accessed March 30, 2013).

morning. As they lay there in the evening twilight, hungry and wet, against the cold sands of Morris Island, with the sea-fog drifting over them, their eyes fixed on the huge bulk of the fortress looming darkly three quarters of a mile ahead against the sky, and their hearts beating in expectation of the word that was to bring them to their feet and launch them on their desperate charge, neither officers nor men could have been in any holiday mood of contemplation...⁴⁶

William did not describe the horrors of a battle he had not seen and nor did he place the soldiers in an American landscape of glorious heroism. His eulogy to their achievements as a black regiment still presents a romanticized image of war, but the soldiers' "picturesqueness" is composed of their body movement, their breathing, their hammering pulses and their overwhelming fatigue even before the battle has begun. The soldiers are both within and a part of nature; they cannot control or contradict it.

William's biographers have evaluated the impact of the Civil War as pivotal to his intellectual and personal development, both in spite and because of the fact that he experienced it only from a distance, remaining safely in the North with his family. But William's concerns about war continued to grow until around the turn of the century, when he was finally able to take action for another cause, the anti-imperialist movement.

1.4 Return to Harvard and Evolutionism

William later wrote of this summer as being the time when "Wilky put an end to everything,"⁴⁷ by which he meant the pleasant, happy days at Newport. He returned to Harvard in September and wrote to his cousin Katharine that "A year and a half of hard work at it here has somewhat dulled my ardor; and after half a year's

⁴⁶ *ERM*, 64.

⁴⁷ Letter to Jeannette Barber Gourlay, (February 21, 1864), *Corr. IX*, 90.

vegetation at home, I am back here again, studying this time Comparative Anatomy. I am obliged before the 15th of January to make finally and irrevocably the ‘choice of a profession.’”⁴⁸ In the event, James studied comparative anatomy under Jeffries Wyman (1814-1874), a professor at Harvard, moving on over the next few years to study both natural history and medicine and becoming immersed in the widespread discussion on evolutionism.

Natural history was at the very center of the storm that followed the November 1859 publication of Darwin’s *Origin*. At Harvard, discussions on evolutionism had been initiated by its central figures: the Swiss palaeontologist Louis Agassiz (1807-1873), a creationist who found it impossible to accept Darwin’s evolutionary theory, and American botanist Asa Gray (1810-1888) who, along with Wyman, was a prominent supporter of it. The academic environment created by these professors helps us to understand William’s course to embracing Darwinism.

Agassiz was a prominent European naturalist who had rapidly gained popularity in America after arriving there in 1846. William had been to Boston to listen to Agassiz lecture soon after entering Harvard through the Lawrence Scientific School in 1861. Agassiz’s career was nourished by his wide acquaintance with distinguished naturalists. He had studied medicine and natural history in Zurich, Heidelberg and Munich, where he absorbed the philosophy of German idealists, especially through his acquaintance with Lorenz Oken (1779-1851), one of the naturalists who developed ‘Naturphilosophie’, which sought ‘the unity of nature’ thorough morphological study. In the year Agassiz obtained his MD, he was also offered for his research on fish fossils in Brazil was offered a PhD.

His next stop was Paris, where he worked under French palaeontologist George Cuvier (1769-1832). Agassiz learnt from Cuvier’s highly skilled and laborious work in comparative anatomy, which resulted in the famous classification of the animal kingdom that divided all animals into four embranchments — vertebrates, molluscs, articulates (insects and crustaceans) and radiates (the simplest animals with nerve cells but no central nervous system, such as jellyfish, sea anemones and corals) — by the fixity of species, according to which all species

⁴⁸ Letter to Katharine James Prince, (September 12, 1863), *Corr. IX*, 81.

have remained unchanged throughout history. These two currents in natural history (the idea of unity rooted in German idealism and Cuvier's theory on the fixity of species) together formed the basis of Agassiz's later theories. His energetic scientific inquiry and his research on fish fossils brought him further success through the 1830s. He amplified Cuvier's theory of the Earth's severe and sudden cooling by establishing his own Ice Age theory, which altered Cuvier's catastrophism by explaining the variation of living things in terms of both the fixity of species and a geological separation by extended ice plates that caused the extinction of earlier species.

In spite of his success, and perhaps because of his absorption in his work, Agassiz confronted severe financial difficulties and the failure of his publication business and his marriage. Still, his sociability allowed him to benefit from the Munich circle, especially his relationship with Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859). What saved him was Humboldt's intermediary support and then an offer of financial aid for a survey in America from the king of Prussia. It was an opportunity for Agassiz to start afresh, even though he did not yet know how long he would be able to stay. He then received a lectureship at the Lowell Institute, a precursor of the Lawrence Scientific School, which gave him a supplementary income that allowed him to stay there.

Agassiz certainly made a major mark on American science; his arrival promoted the establishment of the Lawrence Scientific School and he worked energetically to found a museum of natural history at Harvard, which came into being in 1859 as the Museum of Comparative Zoology. The reason he was sufficiently accepted in America to obtain such remarkable results was due to some affinities between his theory and the New England transcendentalist vision on the relationship between man and nature, as well as his pleasant character and strong sociability.

According to Peter J. Bowler, Agassiz's mentor Cuvier neither accepted the transmutation theory presented by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829) nor implied the design of God in order to explain the internal structural relation between organs

in different species he observed in his comparative anatomy and fossils studies.⁴⁹ His research was pursued under the positivist method. Agassiz, on the other hand, was a staunch creationist who saw an Ice Age as one of a series of mass extinctions designed by God, after which every species was recreated and began afresh. He promoted the idea of the division of animals or, more precisely, of vertebrates, as being the result of the law of parallelism in embryology, which did not admit the common starting point of an embryo and placed man at the head of a linear progressive hierarchy. Moreover, with the idea of unity in nature, he reaffirmed the place of man at the top of the natural hierarchy: "The history of the earth proclaims its creator. It tells us that the object and term of creation is man. He is announced in nature from the first appearance of organized beings; and each important modification in the whole series of these beings is a step toward the definitive term of the development of organic life."⁵⁰ Just before leaving for America, he spoke of "the superiority of the human genre and its greater independence in nature. Whereas the animals are distinct species in the different zoological provinces to which they appertain, man, despite the diversity of his races, constitutes one and the same species over all the surface of the globe."⁵¹

New England intellectuals around Emerson, with Unitarian foundations, had supported the idea of humans as being 'inside' a nature that could also respond to their actions. The affinity between the views of Agassiz and Emerson was not completely a result of chance. As David Robinson pointed out, Emerson's visit to the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris had a great impact on his views.⁵² He arrived there in 1833, into the embers of the discussion between Cuvier and his opponent Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1772-1844), who accepted Lamarck's concept of transformation, and soon after that Agassiz left Paris for the inauguration of the Natural History Museum of Neuchâtel through the intermediation of

⁴⁹ Bowler, 109-111.

⁵⁰ Cited in Bowler, 122-123. Quotation from Louis Agassiz, "On the Succession and Development of Organized Beings at the Surface of the Terrestrial Globe," in *Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal* 33, (1842): 388-399.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 399.

⁵² David Robinson, "Emerson's Natural Theology and the Paris Naturalists: Toward a Theory of Animated Nature," in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41, no. 1 (January 1980): 69-88.

Humboldt.

In short, both Agassiz and Emerson were exposed to the same circumstances that sought unity in the development of natural history theory. However, contrary to Agassiz, Emerson had suggested an emphasis on the evolutionary aspects rather than the fixity of species before the Cuvier's exhibition at the museum. In his first published essay, entitled *Nature*, in 1836 — after his return from Europe with fruitful exchange with British philosopher Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), who had prompted Emerson to read about German idealism — he stated, “It is essential to a true theory of nature and of man, that it should contain somewhat progressive.” In the same essay, he described the relationship between man and nature as follows:

That spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old. As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests upon the bosom of God; he is nourished by unfailing fountains and draws, at his need, inexhaustible power. Who can set bounds to the possibilities of man? Once inhale the upper air, being admitted to behold the absolute natures of justice and truth, and we learn that man has access to the entire mind of the Creator, is himself the creator in the finite.⁵³

In spite of their different views, especially on a theoretical level in natural science, it is possible to see a certain accord between the vision of man's place in nature and that of man's positive effect on it. Agassiz was welcomed into a literary circle that had gathered around Emerson, who would become a leader among transcendentalist thinkers in New England. The circle organised a regular meeting known as The Saturday Club, where members could encounter other scholars and established professionals. Agassiz's influence was strong enough for it to be nicknamed the ‘Agassiz club’, and Henry Sr obtained membership when the family installed in Boston on their return to America. As seen in the passage above,

⁵³ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature: Addresses and Lectures* (Philadelphia: David Mackay Publisher, 1894), 64-65.

Emerson affirmed the idea of man as a species growing under the Creator. This view accorded with the Bible's description of mankind as originating from one man (Adam) created by God and so did not contradict Agassiz's beliefs as a Christian. Therefore, from the point of view of the 'oneness' of human beings at its source, Agassiz could share the abolitionism supported by his Northern intellectual community, which became polemic enough to divide the country in civil war.

But Agassiz's monogenism had been modified after his arrival in America, whereupon he converted to polygenism, which offered a 'scientific' reason for segregating people by race. Soon after reaching America, he saw black people for the first time in his life and took a dual attitude of hatred and fraternity towards them, becoming a polygenist yet simultaneously an abolitionist. In a letter to his mother he wrote, "What unhappiness for the white race to have tied its existences so closely to that of the Negroes in some countries. God protect us from such contact."⁵⁴ His abolitionist attitude was not in any sense supported by the kind of fraternity that existed in the black regiments of Massachusetts.⁵⁵

In fact, Agassiz's conversion helped him to become known in America as a scientist. Menand points out that in his first lecture at the Lowell Institute, Agassiz outlined his theory that "negroes and whites" were of the same species but had separate origins, then apparently changed his belief ten months later to insist that "negroes were, physically and anatomically, a distinct species."⁵⁶ Stephan Jay Gould explains Agassiz's ideological conversion from two starting points: first, his theory of the division of species, according to which each species is created in its proper place and should not migrate from this "center of creation." Second, his 'splitter' tendency as a taxonomist, which established different species by minimal differences in form. Gould suggests that "an extreme splitter who viewed organisms

⁵⁴ Agassiz, letter to his mother in 1846, cited in Stephen Jay Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*. 2nd rev. ed. (New York and London: WW Norton & Co, 1996), 45; almost the same phrase is cited in Menand, 112.

⁵⁵ Asa Gray had an early insight about Agassiz's superficial agreement with abolitionism. He wrote in a letter: "Agassiz has prejudiced (not scientific men but) the Orthodox against him by associating himself with Gliddon and Nott, and by his view on human species. To us they are merely unfounded: to many unscientific people they are offensive." Letter to Joseph Dalton Hooker, (October 6, 1858), Dupee, 229.

⁵⁶ Louis Menand, "Morton, Agassiz, and the Origins of Scientific Racism in the United States," in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 34, (December 2001): 112.

as created over their entire range might well be tempted to regard human races as separate creations.”⁵⁷ Eventually, as a creationist in the 1860s, Agassiz found he could not escape from his theoretical contradictions under the impact of Darwin’s evolutionary theory.

The botanist Asa Gray was an American proponent of Darwinism who had communicated with Darwin, through his close compeer botanist Joseph Dalton Hooker (1817-1911), since his stay in Europe in the late 1830s. As a result he was already partly acquainted with Darwin’s argument and he even knew that *The Origin of Species* would be published in the summer of 1859. Having been critical of Agassiz’s ‘fixism’, in January 1860, soon after the publication of *Origin*, Gray challenged Agassiz in several scientific meetings at the American Academy of Art and Sciences, where Agassiz denounced Darwin’s geological insufficiency. Holding his position as anti-Darwinian, Agassiz was supported by his peers who still upheld creationism. But it is not easy to label a position as being simply anti- or pro-Darwin. Although Gray was a spearhead of evolutionism, he could not necessarily propagate it with full understanding, especially when it came to the concept of natural selection.

Evolution theory was still being accepted or rejected because of its theological and philosophical connotations, and its key concept of natural selection remained relatively unexamined at first, perhaps because of its critical non-teleological character that Darwin himself had struggled to believe. American scientific circles were greatly influenced by Agassiz’s “theistic to excess” attitude, and Darwin’s “orthodox view”⁵⁸ tended to be interpreted as atheism because of his arguments on natural selection. Each scientist produced interpretations of the theory in their different disciplines of natural history, all seeking to explain new facts arising from their research whilst reinforcing their previous ideas.

Seeking unity in nature in a way similar to Emerson, Gray, who was also a member of the Saturday Club, was interested in morphology under the influence of “philosophical botany” through his own connection with Swiss botanist Augustin

⁵⁷ Gould, 44.

⁵⁸ Hunter A. Duprée, *Asa Gray: American Botanist Friend of Darwin*, (1959; repr; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 273.

Pryramus de Candolle (1778-1841), whose method based on the concept of homology in organisms had been developed under the influence of Lamarck.⁵⁹ Gray's main argument was not about the existence of design stuck to by Agassiz but rather the philosophical problem of the contingency of natural selection, which contradicted his view of idealism in natural history.⁶⁰ According to Gray's biographer Duprée, Gray hoped "to accept as a scientific probability the fact that one species might vary into another," but because of his idealism he saw that "to extend this to the whole of organic life was a philosophical problem, and one which involved the whole relation of science and religion."⁶¹ Gray proposed a compromised theory on natural selection and creationism by keeping a certain consideration of God in his ideas on the morphology of plants.

Jeffries Wyman, Gray's colleague at Harvard, joined his side as an important supporter. He also responded to Darwin's *Origin*, providing some facts and views on comparative anatomy that Darwin integrated into a later revised edition.⁶² After studying medicine, Wyman had worked as demonstrator of anatomy under the famous 19th century surgeon John Collins Warren (1778-1856), professor of anatomy and surgery at the Harvard Medical School, but Wyman also had to supplement his income by working as fireman for the Boston Fire Department. When he lost his post at Harvard, which was taken over by Gray in the early 1840s, he went to Europe, perhaps on the advice of Warren who had studied with Cuvier and knew scientists around him.⁶³ After staying in London, he went to Paris to give a series of lectures in Natural Histories.

This journey allowed Wyman to become acquainted with European naturalists such as Richard Owen (1804-1894), the British biologist and comparative anatomist

⁵⁹ Toby A. Appel, "Jeffries Wyman, Philosophical Anatomy, and the Scientific Reception of Darwin in America," in *Journal of the History of Biology* 21, no.1, (April 1988): 73.

⁶⁰ Hunter A. Duprée, "The Crest of the Darwinian Debate," in *Asa Gray: American Botanist, Friend of Darwin*, 284-306.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 265, 273.

⁶² Darwin highly appreciated Wyman's scientific contribution, particularly Wyman's work on higher apes, which had an important role in his discussion in the *Descent of Man*, and *Selection in Relation to Sex* (London, 1st edition: John Murray, 1871). Hunter A. Duprée, "Some Letters from Charles Darwin to Jeffries Wyman," in *Isis* 42, no.2 (June 1951): 104-110.

⁶³ George E. Gifford, "An American in Paris, 1841-1842," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 22, no.3, (1967): 27.

who was to become an opponent of Darwin. After this journey, which kept him up to date with contemporary ideas on natural history in Europe, Wyman started to teach ‘philosophical anatomy’ or ‘transcendental anatomy’, founded on the search for ideal structural patterns in the classification of natural history through the study of homology between different groups of plants and animals.

It seems that Wyman was already well acquainted with the theories on unity, and he was impressed with the museum at the Jardin des Plantes, in which he found American specimens that had been evaluated by European naturalists. He was eager to develop the American collection and went on to establish his own small museum of comparative anatomy, which became a precursor to the Peabody Museum at Harvard, the first museum of anthropology.⁶⁴ With his wide knowledge in the field of natural history, along with his primary knowledge of comparative anatomy, Wyman had approached evolutionism more slowly than the botanist Gray. He tried to find a long-term answer to the problems caused by the notion of natural selection, which seemed to be negative points in Darwin’s theory that might render nature as mechanical and non-divine.⁶⁵ At the very beginning, Wyman wrote to Darwin that he entertained “the belief that progressive development is a far more probable theory than progressive creation.”⁶⁶ Even though he did not clearly embrace the idea of natural selection, he contributed to the development of evolution theory through the reliable evidence presented to him by his anatomical work and laboratory experiments.

It was a very demanding task, even for specialists, to face up to this turning-point paradigm of Darwin’s theory, and Darwin himself continued to revise

⁶⁴ On Wyman’s contribution to the Peabody Museum in early period, see Browman, 509. Wyman organized his collection at the Boylston Hall as the Museum of Comparative Anatomy in 1858, one year before the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard opened through the initiative of Agassiz. He was then appointed the first curator of the Peabody Museum in 1866, which remained without its building until 1878.

⁶⁵ Duprée concluded Wyman’s conversion to evolutionism without his acceptance of natural selection. Criticizing this view, Appel argued for Wyman’s reception of natural selection through careful examination of the theory. He faced the contingency in nature through his experiment on ‘spontaneous generation’ in the 1860s, which was denied in the same period by French microbiologist Louis Pasteur. According to Duprée, Wyman’s hesitance to accept this theory came from a philosophical difficulty with Darwin’s mechanism. Duprée 1988, 88.

⁶⁶ Letter of Wyman to Charles Darwin, (September 15, 1860), <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-2901>

his theory by responding to criticism until he published the sixth edition of *Origin*. At the same time, Agassiz's lectures were having great impact on scientists as well as the public. Feinstein describes the participation of Agassiz's audiences as follows: "The debate over Darwin's theory had ruffled their religious sensibilities, and the devout were relieved to hear this professor, whose forebears had been ministers of the Gospel for six generations and who was a recognized scientist of international repute, assure them that man was not bound by his animal nature, though his body might be classified among vertebrates."⁶⁷

But Agassiz might have arranged his eloquent lectures for the public interest without entering into the scientific discussions of specialists.⁶⁸ His success as an American naturalist had been established for nearly two decades prior to 1859, but after that his theories came into question and his authority as scientist went into decline.

When he first attended Agassiz's lectures as a young student, William James was full of admiration for the man who gave such enthusiastic and interesting talks, and he hoped that he would be able to learn under Agassiz for many years to come. Still, his attitude was at least different from that of Agassiz's usual audience. As Toby A. Appel pointed out, the students of Agassiz who later became leading biologists were also students of Wyman,⁶⁹ and James had also attended some of Wyman's lectures at the very beginning of his study. However, with the theory of evolutionism having been launched at the beginning of the 1860s, it is clear that James did not completely believe Agassiz's creationist theory. It is not certain exactly when James first started to read Darwin, but Wyman had introduced the theory of evolution in his classes from the winter semester of 1861-62. It is possible to consider Wyman's influence on James' desire to understand and examine Darwin's theory, reserving his *parti pris* despite the sympathy for creationism demonstrated by the people closest to him (including his father).

⁶⁷ *BWJ*, 152.

⁶⁸ Menand points out that Asa Gray had criticised Agassiz's "showmanship" as his style. Gray wrote also to JD Hooker about Agassiz, in the same letter mentioned in an earlier footnote: "he is always writing and talking ad populum — fond of addressing himself to an incompetent tribunal." Menand, 125.

⁶⁹ Appel, 70.

It was also with Wyman's help that James finally made up his mind to attend medical school. In a letter to his mother in November 1863, he wrote, "I shall then confer with Wyman about the prospects of a naturalist and finally decide. I want you to become familiar with the notion that I may stick to science, however, and drain away at your property for a few years more..."⁷⁰ Even at medical school, where he couldn't establish a solid interest in the art of medicine, James learnt mainly under the direction of Wyman,⁷¹ who himself had an MD, as did most natural history scientists in the 19th century; it was an assurance of their pursuit of science as 'pure knowledge'. James also wanted to stay with science for its moral 'purity', although he described his first impressions of medicine as follows: "My first impressions are that there is much humbug therein, and that, which the exception of surgery in which something positive is sometimes accomplished, a doctor does more by the moral effect of his presence on the patient and family, than by anything else. He also extracts money from them."⁷² Although James never practiced medicine in a clinic, despite his earlier hopes of being "useful" in his profession, Wyman's guidance encouraged him to maintain his interest in science beside his study of medicine.

His training under Wyman in laboratory work was influential, and he continued working in laboratories for the next two decades, albeit intermittently because of his impatience and his ill health. Soon after James returned to Harvard in the fall of 1863, he wrote to his sister of his "filial feeling" for Wyman and described his working environment: "I work in a vast museum, at a table all alone, surrounded by skeletons of mastodons, crocodiles, and the like, with the walls hung about with monsters and horrors enough to freeze the blood. But I have no fear, as most of them are tightly bottled up."⁷³ According to Feinstein, finding himself inside a building full of nature collected for scientific purposes, James's intention here was to scare his young sister with "a scene of Gothic horror" in order to emphasise his own courage.

⁷⁰ Letter of WJ to MWJ, (November 2, 1863), *Corr. IV*, 86.

⁷¹ *TCWJI*, 216.

⁷² Letter of WJ to Jeannette Barber Gourlay, (February 21, 1864), *Corr. IV*, 90.

⁷³ Letters of WJ to AJ, (September 13, 1863), *Corr. IX*, 83-84.

Feinstein also sees evidence of James's anxiety at the time, especially in his drawings of a turtle with malicious eyes and a menacing mouth, which seemed to reflect his thoughts on the existence of evil in nature. But beyond any religious connotations, if we interpret the turtle's look as a challenge to the unilateral way in which science examined nature, we can perhaps see evidence of the epistemological uncertainty that confronted James.⁷⁴

Throughout his laboratory work, James's experience of painting gave him another way to approach his science, learning about living things through their dead bodies. He made sketches of several specimens while studying them. In his medical class he even made a sketch of a dead human body, paying close attention to the dead foot's still-growing toenails and the heavy, rock-like head. Compared with his previous allegorical drawings of animals and humans, it is clear that James's interest in the character of nature was deepened by his scientific study.

If we see grotesqueness in James' drawings, it is not only because of the existential questions relating to the struggle with his father pointed to by Feinstein, but also because of his epistemological insight. He was surrounded by specimens or bodies for dissection, which forced him to question issues of life and death as well as the ability of objective science to deal with them. James saw the relationship between scientists and the objects they chose to analyse and classify as being dynamic and not unilaterally fixed from the point of 'science as knower'. If it is possible to compare his drawings of this period as a group, as Feinstein did, it seems that James might already have conceived of the uncertainty, similar to that inherent in the production of 'pure knowledge' in museums, that came directly from the authority of scientists.

⁷⁴ The facial expression of turtles was not only James' deformation. The stuffed specimens had certain modifications by makers. Among the specimens still conserved at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard, there are some turtles mounted with menacing face and with lifted necks. One of them had been conserved during James' period of study. The catalog recorded its transferred year as 1842. Herpetology R-46601: *Geochelone elephantopus elephantopus*, the Museum of Comparative Zoology, <http://mczbase.mcz.harvard.edu/guid/MCZ:Herp:R-46601> (accessed May 29, 2012).

1.5 Journey to Brazil

While evolutionary theory was still coming to be recognized as a scientifically valid paradigm, William James was thrown into field research. In 1865, he again took absence from school, this time to participate in an expedition to Brazil that would allow him to study under Agassiz as he had wanted to more than four years earlier. On 1 April 1865, as the Civil War drew to a close, the Thayer expedition, headed by Agassiz and financed by his friend, Boston banker Nathaniel Thayer (1808-1883), left by ship from New York to Brazil. The aim of this expedition, which went on for fifteen months, was for Agassiz to pursue his research on freshwater fish in the Brazilian Amazon (in short, finding evidence that different species exist in different areas, based on geographical particularities in Amazon). Faced with the evolutionists' opposition to his creationist theories, as well as with his own poor health, this was an opportunity for Agassiz to take a rest while simultaneously seeking new facts to prove his theory and recover his declining influence in science.

When Agassiz called for self-funding student volunteers to help with the research expedition, James took his leave of absence and joined the party with five others, including one of his best friends, Thomas Warren Ward (1844-1940). The volunteers all came from prestigious families; James was funded by his father and his maternal aunt, Catharine Walsh. He wanted to acquire a more systematic understanding of natural history methodology, and he also wanted to leave in search of uncharted territory and rugged terrains as he thought this would make him hardier. In the Victorian era, outdoor activities were considered healthy and a way of building 'manliness', especially for those who were otherwise absorbed in intellectual activities that took place indoors and were often thought to cause nervous breakdowns.⁷⁵ It also seemed to be a great opportunity for an educational trip for those who were interested in natural history.

James' relationship with Agassiz was full of contradictions from the start. His admiration for Agassiz as charismatic and inspiring lecturer was shadowed by doubts about his creationist theory. Also, Agassiz's form of abolitionism, which

⁷⁵ Machado, *BEWJ*, 15-16.

promoted the segregation of black people, conflicted with James's brothers' involvement with the black regiments of the North. James was not even particularly well informed about Agassiz's project as a whole. Ultimately, James remained with the party for just eight months, and his voyage to Brazil was later often seen as a failure, albeit an original and useful experience for his subsequent work.

It was only gradually, over his eight months of working as a collector for Agassiz, that James came to understand the latter's personality as a scientist and the political meaning of his expedition. His reactions to Agassiz's racism come to us through his reflections on the character of natural history research as being intricately linked to the territorial expansion of the states that supported it, resulting in an unbalanced power relation between the foreign naturalists and their research objects, namely the nature, cultures and people they set out to 'discover'.

For the first half of the journey, James was confronted with a series of difficulties, beginning with the terrible seasickness he suffered on the ship from New York to Brazil. He wrote to his family, "O the vile Sea! The damned Deep! No one has a right to write about the 'nature of Evil' or to have any opinion about evil, who has not been at sea."⁷⁶ Taking an ironic pride in mentioning the title of his father's book,⁷⁷ he explained in depth the hardships he had overcome thus far. However, although he had traversed the Atlantic many times with his family, he found himself in "a more indescribably hopeless, homeless and friendless state than I ever want to be in again."⁷⁸ The reality of sea travel betrayed his desire for adventure, and he described what he saw from the ship in depressed mood:

I suppose I ought to write you an iridescent account of our sail over the tropics; but the tropical Atlantic certainly is just like the northern sea. I thought the sky would be of a deep Prussian blue over a sea of the same color, with spice-laden winds, and birds of Paradise; nautilus and flying fish; porpoises and bonitas, phosphorescences at night rivalling the moon, and all that kind of stuff. Neither skies nor sunsets nor sea are of any livelier hue

⁷⁶ Letters of WJ to HJ Sr. and MWJ, (April 21, 1865), *Corr. IV*, 100.

⁷⁷ His father HJ Sr published his book *Nature of Evil* in 1885.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 101.

than with us. We have seen a few flying fish, but they are not near as interesting as toads are at home. On one or two nights there has been phosphorescence, but never more, if ever so much, as I have seen at Newport. As for the Southern Cross and the clouds of Magellan, they are very third-rate affaires. The Ocean is a d——d wet, disagreeable place anyhow, is my conclusion; you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.⁷⁹

In the same letter, James also paraphrased from Agassiz's lectures on the ship: "We must give up our pet theories of transmutation, spontaneous generation &c. And seek in nature what God has put there rather than try to put there some system which our imagination has devised &c &c."⁸⁰ Agassiz had no qualms about rejecting Darwinian evolutionism. James's apparent distancing from Agassiz's general opinions might have been partly because of his seasickness, but it also revealed that he no longer had full confidence in Agassiz and his ideas.

Three weeks later, as soon as he alighted from the ship at Rio de Janeiro, he hastened to write about the scenes before him. For almost three months after their arrival on 22 April, the party stayed in Rio de Janeiro to prepare for their journey inside Brazil, but the time was also used in pursuit of some political aims. By re-editing James' letters and diaries from this period, Maria Helena Pereira Toledo Machado achieves some focus on the expansionist ideology behind this expedition to the Amazon, a place in which the United States, (both South and North), had been interested even before the war for the purpose of gaining a place to settle their black populations.

Agassiz was also charged with a diplomatic interest in the free passage of the Amazon for Americans with a letter from William Henry Seward (1801-1872), then United States Secretary of State, to his friend James Watson Webb, the American minister in the court of Brazilian Emperor Pedro II.⁸¹ It was, indeed, the age of imperialism. In fact, to gain control in the Amazonian area was a matter of international interest, as Brazil was engaged in the War of the Triple Alliance

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 101.

⁸⁰ Letter of WJ to HJ Sr. and MWJ, (April 21, 1865), *Corr. IV*, 101.

⁸¹ *BEWJ*, 16-17.

(1864-1870), with Uruguay and Argentina as its allies against Paraguay, which also influenced the expedition plan. The true nature of Agassiz's mission was not known to all of its members, but James guessed the intention from the geographical surveys of the Province of Ceara planned by Agassiz with some other expedition members:

Prof. wants some geological work to be done. Prof. has told us nothing about it. All I know is, it will be a tough journey of about 5 mos., mostly on mule-back. How we can transport collections, I know not, as the country is most uninhabited and very little travelled. The Emperor wanted to send Agassiz over that route for the moral effect on the Brazilians, but it is much too long a journey for him to take. Something is said of the Emperor furnishing transportation and an escort. I hope he will.⁸²

In fact, Pedro II sent them a guide who was a Brazilian army engineer with experience in geology, especially in the Amazon. However, with only the haziest vision of the forthcoming travels, William wrote to Henry on his suspicions about Agassiz:

Since seeing more of Agassiz, my desire to be with him so as to learn from him has much diminished. He is doubtless a man of some wonderful mental faculties, but such a politician and so self-seeking and illiberal to others that it sadly diminishes one's respect for him. Don't say anything about this outside, for heaven's sake, as my judgement is a very hasty one.⁸³

In any case, James did not go directly with the team but stayed in Rio de Janeiro after contracting a kind of smallpox that saw him hospitalized and even rendered him temporarily blind, with lingering after-effects on his eyes that continued to trouble him even after the illness had subsided. The hot, humid tropical climate and incessant mosquitoes bothered the sickly James, and he was also

⁸² *Ibid.*, 59.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 59

annoyed by the great expense of his treatment. This, combined with his doubts about Agassiz, caused him to write to his father about leaving the expedition and returning home:

My coming was a mistake, a mistake as regards what I anticipated, and a pretty expensive one for both you, dear old Father, and for the dear generous old Aunt Kate. I find that by staying I shall learn next to nothing of natural history as I care about learning it. My whole work will be mechanical, finding objects and packing them, and working so hard at that and in traveling that no time at all will be found for studying their structure. The affaire reduces itself thus to so many months spent in physical exercise. Can I afford this? *First*, pecuniarily? No!⁸⁴

As even Agassiz admitted on his return, James' Brazil travel was often interpreted as a failed challenge, especially in contrast to the war successes of others of his generation. Nonetheless, it was not a bitter experience but a decisive one that marked him for philosophy, and as such it was only the beginning of the influential journey of William James.⁸⁵ In the event, once he had regained strength after his illness he stayed on with the crew: having been liberated from his battle against his illness, he could now open himself up to where he actually was. He also had enough energy to join in with the "men's activities," which, he said, "are occupied in two ways: in grappling with external circumstances, and in striving to set things at one in their own topsy-turvy mind."⁸⁶

Captivated by nature in the tropics, he began to observe it more closely, beyond his typically picturesque descriptions: "The bewildering profusion and confusion of the vegetation, the inexhaustible variety of its forms and tints (yet they tell us we are in the winter when much of its brilliancy is lost) are *literally* such as

⁸⁴ Letter of WJ to HJ Sr., (June 3, 1865), *Corr. IV*, 106.

⁸⁵ Machado sees that it was after his recovery that "James challenged himself to test the authenticity of experience." Machado, p23. Menand interprets James's journey in Brazil as his own civil war, for which he sought an alternative battle and suffered in the process. Menand, 137-138.

⁸⁶ Letter of WJ to HJ Sr. (June 3, 1865), *Corr. IV*, 105.

you have never dreamt of.”⁸⁷ Moving along the River Amazon, he sought to describe the abundant jungle nature. As Machado follows Daniel W Bjork’s argument, what James described about this land whose features had been transformed through its contact with a river that itself was changing through its interaction with a different watercourse would become an important reference to the ‘stream of thoughts’:

After this it was decided to go over to a beach which lay opposite and spend the first part of the night. I supposed the beach had recently been connected with the left bank, but the river rising had already made it an island with a broad channel between it and the shore. I took a long walk over it and found neither gulls nor eggs, but two enormous silvery trees which in their passage down had got their trunks across each other and then their branches catching the bottom had come to anchor in this spot. The river, going down, had left them, high and dry. No, not exactly dry, for a deep pool had been excavated beneath them by the current which was now filled with green, stagnant water and covered with minute flies. Oh to be a big painter, for here was a big subject. Nothing could be more simple. The plain beach, the red west, the giant trunks with their crooked crowns and roots (the largest could not have been less than 20 feet in circumference), the immense eddying stream and the thin far-off line of forest. It was as grand and lonely as could be.⁸⁸

Here James was confronted by the difficulty of describing an environment of living things and rendering a static image of its totality, aware that only a master painter with talent far greater than his own would even be able to attempt to create such an image. This in contrast to his own earlier studies of the dead laboratory specimens described above.

The task of naturalists was to describe the flora and fauna of unexamined areas and place them, named by and after their discoverers, within the system of

⁸⁷ Letter of WJ to HJ, (July 15, 1865), *Corr. I*, 9.

⁸⁸ *BEWJ*, 90-91.

taxonomy. In much the same way, travel literature of the age had a tendency to describe landscapes without reference to their inhabitants. In Agassiz's record entitled *A Journey in Brazil*,⁸⁹ which was largely based on the diary that was kept by his wife Elizabeth, the landscapes were described as idealized, distant and seen, as James criticized later, in "an unnatural romantic light."⁹⁰ For his own part, James could not ignore his annoyance with the insects and humidity, and he was not just observing his surroundings to find the answers he expected but went deep into the tropical nature and wondered about it as a painter might.

It is true that James also often indulged in seeing Brazilian life within a picturesque framework, idealizing its primitivity and wildness, but even then his tone was different from the contemptible racism of Agassiz and his wife, who warned of hybridism as a danger of miscegenation and whose observations on Brazilian people were biased from the beginning to prove this theory; their romanticized vision of the landscape served to efface the reality of its inhabitants. Brazil was seen by Agassiz as a laboratory of racial mixture and miscegenation, and he made three series of photographs that he classified in what he considered to be "the natural history method," including "the comparison of individuals of different kinds with one another, just as naturalists compare specimens of different species." This meant not only a set of arbitrary and rough criteria based on "negro", "Indian" and "white" as "pure" types, but also Agassiz's way of seeing and using people as "specimens."⁹¹

As the expedition went on, James increasingly wrote in opposition of Agassiz, noting in his diary, for example, his embarrassment about the photographic studio set up by Agassiz for the purpose of a physiognomical study of racial types. He expressed his unease with the collection criteria, and was embarrassed at the way Agassiz treated his subjects:

One entering the room I found Prof. engaged in cajoling three mocas whom

⁸⁹ Elizabeth Cabot Cary Agassiz and Louis Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil* (Boston: Tucknor and Fields, 1869).

⁹⁰ *BEWJ*, 88.

⁹¹ Elizabeth Cabot Cary Agassiz and Louis Agassiz, 529.

he called pure Indians but who I thought, as afterward appeared, had white blood. They were very nicely dressed in white muslin and jewellery with flowers in their hair and an excellent smell of pripioca. Apparently refined, not at all sluttish, they consented to the utmost liberties being taken with them and without too much trouble were induced to strip and pose naked.⁹²

James soon found an opportunity to meet and get close to Brazilian people by separating from the other expedition members. A part of the crew went to up to the Solimões, where he captured the image of the waterside cited above and where he stayed for one month. During an excursion by canoe, he developed a cordial relationship with his six Brazilian crew members and especially with his guide Signor Urbano, whom he described as “a good-looking cafuzo with much more black than Indian blood in him, about 60 years old, dressed in shiny suit of black alpaca.”⁹³ On observing a conversation between the crewmembers and an elderly woman, James marvelled at “the quiet urbane polite tone of the conversation between my friends and the old lady. It is race or is it circumstance that makes these people so refined and well bred? No gentleman of Europe has better manners and yet these are peasants.”⁹⁴ His encounter with the hospitable people and his friendship with Signor Urbano impressed James immensely.

He also came to realize that the expedition was being undermined by an idleness that he considered linked to the roughness of Agassiz’s research. In a letter to his mother, he expressed his “real enjoyment of the expedition” along with his decision not to leave soon for home, but another anxiety emerged: “Agassiz is too happy for anything, I fear the Gods are bent upon his ruin — Since we arrived at Para 14 days ago he has found forty-six new species of fish, and a total number of fishes greater than the collection which Spix and Martius made in the whole four years of their sojourn! The reason is that he gets everyone to help him.”⁹⁵ Agassiz’s enthusiasm for discovery attracted people’s interest but at the same time, in pushing

⁹² *BEWJ*, 88.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁹⁵ Letter of WJ to MWJ, *Corr. IV*, 111.

forward, he became egotistical at the center of his project. In his next letter from the Tapajos River, where James went to collect fish, he wrote to his sister: “We left the steamer with a barrel of biscuits and a number of bottles of wine and ale contributed by the captain, and some kegs and cans half-full of alcohol to put the fishes in. We all considered it a very foolish expedition because the Prof. only gave us eight days to do it in, and no collection worth a cent can be made in that time; but the Prof. is very apt to do things in that rash manner.”⁹⁶

James reassumed this idea in a different way when he came across four Spanish naturalists on the Solimões course. They had been sent to the Amazon by the Spanish government on behalf of the Museum of Madrid, and James was deeply impressed by their dedication. Reporting this meeting to his family, he wrote, “They have been all through the Andes, been shipwrecked, are the most shabby, bearded, jaundiced looking set of roughs you ever saw. Beside their voyage ours seems like a holiday excursion.”⁹⁷ He described them in his diary as follows:

One of their party had died and the two others had gone to California. They had been through sun & rain & swamp in their wanderings, had been shipwrecked & lost most all their personal property, were without money and most grotesquely clothed in what had been saved from the wreck... Never had I seen a more shaggy, stained, weatherbeaten, jaundiced set of men — and I have seldom felt like honoring men more.”⁹⁸

His own expedition, which he expected at the outset to be full of adventure and discovery, had started to seem less like a serious scientific venture than a leisurely holiday. But as we have seen, James’ own understanding of the Amazonian nature and people developed during the latter part of his time there, when he was able to stay in the field and immerse himself more fully in the situation around him. Through his diary entries, as Machado points out, it seems that James’ experience was acquiring an authenticity that was separate from the official purpose of the

⁹⁶ Letter of WJ to AJ, (August 31, 1865), *Corr. IV*, 113.

⁹⁷ Letter of WJ to HJ Sr. and MWJ, (September 18, 1865), 125.

⁹⁸ “A Month on the Solimões”, *BEWJ*, 97.

expedition. However, it is still possible to examine his personal experiences, such as those at the Solimões, within the framework of the expedition as a whole; its superficial “holiday picnic”⁹⁹ -- like approach masking yet inherently connected to the unilateral American expansionism into ‘virgin’ land.

Even though James seems to have distanced himself from Agassiz on a theoretical level after the expedition, he maintained a certain ambivalence about it. Agassiz’s brash approach to gathering evidence for his theories, in contrast to his enthusiastic devotion to his science, may have confused James’s evaluation of his work. And Agassiz clung to creationism even after the widespread acceptance of Darwin’s evolutionary theory, while James came around to Darwin’s ideas through his own observations in Brazil and his growing doubts about the professor.

James’ negative opinion of the expedition came from the way it was structured as well as the system that allowed a collectivity of research to be reduced to the name of a single scientist. James repeatedly complained about the laborious and monotonous work of collection. Even though he was a student who had volunteered for the expedition for the purpose of acquiring training, he felt some unease with being forced to concentrate on collecting primary data whilst suspending any reflection on it, and therefore learning very little about the methodologies of natural science. Meanwhile, Agassiz’s own professional achievements were being massively supported by the contribution of the assistants and volunteers who remained in his shadow.¹⁰⁰ James worked with enthusiasm: what annoyed him was not the laborious process of collecting data so much as the fact that he was allowed no insight into the methodology of using it.

As noted above, James’s own scientific observations were limited to the notes he made in his diaries. In his last diary entry from the Solimões, he made some brief observations on the appearance and behaviour of a spider monkey. Here again James’ notes suggest an intellectual tendency away from Agassiz’s theories,

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Kaeser examined the case of Edouard Desor, who contributed his assistance to Agassiz but had less recognition for his scientific work. Marc-Antoine Kaeser, “La science vécue. Les potentialités de la biographie en histoire des sciences”. *Revue d’Histoire des Sciences Humaines* 8, no.1 (2003): 139; 147.

especially that of human beings holding a special and distinct position from other animals, and towards the evolutionism that he was later to embrace more thoroughly:

Tied to one of the posts of this shed was perhaps the best friend I found in the place, viz a very large or rather long *coaítá* or spider monkey. — This genus monkey, called by naturalists ateles from its thumbs being wanting, is, to judge from the specimens I met, much the most interesting of the South American quadrumana. It stands about two feet and half high when on its hind legs... It was as tame & confiding as a puppy dog; and whenever I came within reach of its all embracing arms he would launch himself forward and cling to me frantically with hands, feet & tail. As his attentions were at times rather oppressive I would forcibly tear myself away, and when, stretched out horizontally between me & the post, he was finally forced to yield his convulsive clutch of my closing, and was jerked back by his tether to the ground, he would go through a tragi-comic performance of despair, which might make the fortune of a pantomimist who should imitate it.¹⁰¹

This image of a monkey wrestling with James reminds us of his drawing of a bear and an explorer engaged in bloody battle.¹⁰² This time, however, he placed himself within his description of the wild but friendly monkey instead of framing it in the distance. The pictures of monkeys drawn during the expedition were not reduced to the allegorical tone that was seen in those of Wyman's turtles. Going further, he analysed the monkey's responses and even its character, as follows:

He would lie on his belly, looking unutterable reproaches at me ... and then after all he would suddenly stop, his attention being called to something. This excessive mental mobility of monkeys, their utter inability to control their attention or their emotions, so that they are as completely possessed by

¹⁰¹ "A Month on the Solimeoens". *BEWJ*, 99.

¹⁰² James' drawing in Houghton Library at Harvard University, Catalog Number bMS AM 1092.2.

whatever feeling happens to be uppermost in them at the time, gives them a helplessness of character which always recommended them to my pity. I am convinced that the vulgar idea of a monkey being a merely ludicrous creature is all wrong — There is a dash of the pathetic in them, poor creatures of impulse that they are, which makes them *interesting* in the young ladies sense of the word.¹⁰³

Grappling with the monkey, James observed the animal's ability to connect and communicate emotionally with a human being. What he thought "interesting" was the strength of its emotion. He did not perceive it as being of a completely different sort from humans, even though its ability to contain its impulses was very limited. This experience must have had a certain impact on his later psychological research on the instincts and emotions of human beings, which we will look at in a later chapter. In the Brazilian Amazon, beside his work as a collector, he could see and feel the living nature of his surroundings, so different from Boston yet sharing a certain commonality. On the one hand he saw animal instincts as being shared by humans, and on the other hand he clearly observed and respected the civility of the local people. This journey was not simply a mistake; it was the turning point that directed him towards philosophical meditation.

Meanwhile, even after the Brazil expedition, Agassiz clung staunchly to his theory of creationism, using the remnants of his public influence to insist upon the truth of its religious connotations. In 1866, after the Thayer expedition, Chauncey Wright wrote that Agassiz "repeated yesterday what he has said at every scientific meeting at which I have heard him speak; and he said it with as much animation as if the world were not weary of it ... it is a chronic case of public speaking, — a brilliant idea which occurred to him once upon a time, and has been a standing marvel of inspiration ever since."¹⁰⁴ This was not the end of James' relationship with the professor — in his obituary for Agassiz he noted that he was indebted to the latter's efforts and leadership in establishing the natural sciences as a course of

¹⁰³ "A Month on the Solimoens", *BEWJ*, 99-100.

¹⁰⁴ Chauncey Wright, letter to Charles Eliot Norton, (August 10, 1866), cited in Menand, 209. Agassiz's name is left blank.

study at Harvard — but his previous admiration for the old naturalist was lost forever. James mildly criticised the way that Agassiz's abstractionism prevented a hands-on approach in the field, saying, "We cannot all escape from being abstractionists. I myself, for instance, have never been able to escape; but the hours I spent with Agassiz so taught me the difference between all possible abstractionists and all livers in the light of the world's concrete fullness, that I have never been able to forget it."¹⁰⁵

But James did distance himself from Agassiz after the expedition. In fact, he left the crew in December 1865, almost half a year earlier than the other members. Then, in April 1867, he left Boston once again for Europe, where he stayed until November 1868. The decision to leave Brazil was partly because he wished to finish his study of medicine and obtain his MD in the shortest possible time, and partly because of his poor health and need for rest. Seeking an effective cure he tried different remedies, including a short stay in the Czech town of Teplice to bathe in the curative thermal springs. This period of therapy also allowed him indulge in some reading. He wanted to improve his German and stayed for a time in Dresden and Berlin, where Emerson introduced him to other influential scientists, such as Herman Grimm (1828-1901), the son of Wilhelm Grimm, who was later to become a prominent scholar on Goethe. This gave James an opportunity to tackle German Idealism and re-examine its influence on comparative anatomy, which still kept the transcendental viewpoint in natural history against the idea of natural selection.

During this time, James undertook a great deal of correspondence, as well as writing some review articles, including one on Darwin's *Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication*.¹⁰⁶ His conviction on the relative merits of Darwin and Agassiz growing stronger, he wrote to Henry from Dresden: "The more I think of Darwin's ideas the more weighty do they appear to me, though of course my opinion is worth very little — still, I believe that scoundrel Agassiz is unworthy either intellectually or morally for him to wipe his shoes on, and I find a certain

¹⁰⁵ ERC: 50, Louis Agassiz, 1896.

¹⁰⁶ First published in January 1868.

pleasure in yielding to the feeling.”¹⁰⁷

William James never stopped travelling and reaching for new places, both physically and intellectually, although this caused him a great deal of confusion and difficulty and probably contributed to his repeated bouts of ill health. However, it also forged his analytical abilities and triggered many of his thought processes on the subjects he was interested in, which he recorded in a voluminous archive of correspondence with his friends and family. It is true that he sometimes succumbed to his own prejudices, but in the context of James’ life and experiences, Darwinian theory seemed to him to provide a more suitable vision of nature than the era’s hitherto more commonly accepted creationism. He thought deeply about the metaphysical elements of experience, including the relationship between primary experience and secondary experience, and how the same object could be seen in different ways.

These issues were undoubtedly raised in response to both his extensive travels and his non-participation in the Civil War. Even though he observed this historical event from a distance, James’ secondary experience of battlefield through his wounded brother, dead cousin and lost friends preoccupied him and possibly motivated him to participate in the expedition to Brazil. He saw that, just as with the dominance of any particular scientific theory, the causes of war could not hold permanent validity as they were ruined by their own contradictions. In this way he therefore realised the inconsistency of the ideal and the pursuit of it.

During his studies, by observing scientists and their work, he came to link their personal tendencies with their intellectual activities. He later went on to analyse the ways in which a scientist or other person would relate to their chosen field of study, as we shall see the coming chapters.

¹⁰⁷ Letter of WJ to HJ, (March 9, 1868), *Corr. I*, 38-39.

Chapter 2: The Diary of Alice James: Personal Experiences and the Written Life

The *Diary* of Alice James (1848-1892) raises the question of how and to what degree it is possible to call our personal experiences our own. As we try to trace her life, we realize that its stories are contextualised by readers' interests in her: the youngest member of this famous literary family has been described, variously, as a feminist icon, a woman writer and a hysteric.

In most cases, her life has generally been perceived as a passive one. Alice James was the youngest child and the only girl in the James family. As the daughter of Henry James Sr and sister of the famous psychologist William and the novelist Henry, her life was intertwined with theirs. Not only did she struggle to find herself amongst the more famous men in her family, even in her own writing, but her text — an attempt to reclaim her own subjective agency — was long forgotten and only rediscovered through research into the lives of those men. Although we can read her diary today as a published book, its publication was a somewhat shadowy process, the text having confronted some difficulty being recognised as valuable in its own right.

Alice's text raises several questions linked to autobiography, including whether, if we find it impossible to have the authenticity of our experiences accepted, we can take ownership of them by writing about them. This chapter will argue that Alice James used her writing as a way of identifying her own perspective and establishing a relationship with herself. With this in mind, we shall attempt to analyse *The Diary of Alice James*¹ by focusing on William James's concepts of self, individuality and personal history, which form a central theme of his thoughts from

¹ Alice James, *The Diary of Alice James*, ed. Leon Edel (1964; repr., Northeastern: Northeastern University Press, 1999).

psychology to philosophy. For this purpose, we will trace her life in relation to her diary before examining its context and focusing on her relationship with her brother William James.

Along with Henry, Alice and William explored the telling of personal histories and experiences. To place their debate in a wider psychological context, we will examine William's essay "The Hidden Self"² and explore her reaction to it. Because of symbolical differences between the two — brother and sister, doctor and patient — feminist readers have insisted that the two were on bad terms. But despite Alice's apparent impatience with William, they shared a great many ideas about the concept of self without the unifying Self in majuscule. The key to this point is to be found in their description of the body by which our consciousness of self is brought, on which our sensation of time and space to tell our experience depended.

2.1 Alice James's Life and Diary

The life of Alice James was shaped both in terms of her family relationships and the long periods of illness she endured from late adolescence onwards. After several short bouts of ill health, she suffered a severe breakdown in early 1868, when she was nineteen. Whilst seeking a concrete diagnosis she saw many different doctors, none of whom could provide evidence of any illness beyond the medically ambiguous term 'hysteria'³. She tried all sorts of experimental therapies, including electric massage, rest cures and therapeutic exercises, but none improved her condition and some even made it worse.

In fact, ill health was a common problem in the James family, as we saw with William in the first chapter. Except for their mother, Mary Robertson Walsh James, the family members fell sick one after the other. Mary dedicated herself selflessly to

² *EPS*, 247-268. Originally published in *Scribner's Magazine* 7, no.3 (March 1890): 361-74.

³ A once-common medical diagnosis, made exclusively in women, which is not recognised today by modern medical authorities. Women considered to be suffering from hysteria exhibited symptoms including fainting, nervousness, sexual desire, insomnia, fluid retention, muscle spasm, shortness of breath, irritability, loss of appetite for food or sex, etc.

caring for them, in line with the Victorian norm of a good wife and mother, and it seems that Henry Sr expected this kind of selfless behaviour from his daughter too.

As already noted, Henry Sr placed great importance upon educating his children. However, this enthusiasm was directed mainly at his sons, especially the elder two, William and Henry. What kind of education did Alice receive? According to Henry, who recalled his father's opposition to William's desire to become an artist, the James children were expected not to pursue any form of success that would 'narrow' their options. On the contrary, Henry wrote, "what we were to do instead was just to be something, something unconnected with specific doing, something free and uncommitted, something finer in short than being *that*, whatever it was, might consist of."⁴ If the brothers could pursue their ideal in their professional course, it was not evident for Alice. As Jane Strouse, Alice's biographer, points out that "To be a James and a girl, then, was a contradiction in terms," because their father saw "women as personifications of virtue, innocent purity, holy self-sacrifice."⁵ However, understanding her father's requirement for her brothers as her own, she sought a way to realize this ideal for women not through the model of her mother but by becoming something else.

At home with her brothers, Alice's growing sense of isolation strongly influenced the formation of her self-understanding. When the James family left for Europe in 1855, she was only seven years old. With her brothers integrated in local schools, she remained at home as an only child, and was well educated by a series of private tutors. Although she responded to her father's expectations of his sons, she had to accept and internalise the impossibility of realising these expectations herself.

At the same time, her sickly disposition also made it impossible for Alice to measure up to her father's ideal of femininity and daughterhood. Staying at home, she became dependent on the family in a way that inhibited her from developing a separate sense of self-awareness. Her 'hysteria' could possibly be seen as a physical

⁴ Henry James, *A Small Boy and Others in Autobiography*, 1913. ed. Frederick W. Dupee (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 269.

⁵ Jean Strouse. *Alice James; a Biography* (1980; repr., Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1999), xiii.

reflection of her entangled daughter/sister relationships with other members of her family and, crucially, the obstacles these placed in the way of her own self-realisation. If we note that hysteria was said to be mimetic in character, it is interesting to consider that her leg was paralysed as if in imitation of her father's leg that was amputated in childhood, and her multiple other symptoms seem reminiscent of the various pains suffered by her brothers. In fact, her most serious attacks repeatedly arose at the major turning points experienced by the other members of her family, with the changes these caused to her relationships with them apparently acting as a trigger.

On the other hand, as Strouse observes, the Jameses' repeated health problems made it seem as if they took turns with malaise through the "bank-account theory"; an analogy to explain a "Jamesian notion about a constant level of family health and pleasure," as follows: "One member, when sick, might feel that he or she was making a sacrifice so that the others could remain healthy — or, less positively, that he or she was forced to pay the family 'tax' in suffering while the others got off free."⁶ Strouse advances this interpretation by the bank-account theory to adapt to their intellectual activities as well as their health. In other words, when Alice proclaimed herself to be the "idiotoid sister," it might have been an attempt to restrain her own intelligence in order to distribute it to other members of the family, especially her brothers, who were expected to make extraordinary intellectual achievements.⁷ At any rate, her self-understanding was tightly linked with her that of her family members.

Alice seems to have made a habit of affirming herself negatively. Especially in her younger days, she was not able to participate in the males' discussions and the atmosphere at home was anyway likely to marginalise her intelligence. Edward Waldo Emerson, the youngest child of the transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson, wrote about the James family ambience during his visit to their house in Newport in the early 1860s:

⁶ Jan Strouse, 112-3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 116.

“The adipose and affectionate Wilkie,” as his father called him, would say something and be instantly corrected or disputed by the little cock-sparrow Bob, the youngest, but good-naturedly defend his statement, and then Henry (Junior) would emerge from his silence in defence of Wilkie. Then Bob would be more impertinently insistent, and Mr. James would advance as moderator, and William, the eldest, join in. The voice of the moderator presently would be drowned by the combatants and he soon came down vigorously into the arena, and when, in the excited argument, the dinner knives might not be absent from eagerly gesticulating hands, dear Mrs. James, more conventional, but bright as well as motherly, would look at me, laughingly reassuring, saying, “Don’t be disturbed, Edward; they won’t stab each other. This is usual when the boys come home.”⁸

Although sidelined by masculine banter, Alice was not necessarily a reticent girl. On the contrary, according to her mother, she often “sassed” her family. As Strouse pointed out, she may have given up her voice amidst the squabbling siblings, but the family would have discovered her reflections only when they were sharp with a bit of surprise; that is to say, basically she was not considered as a member of the discussion.

It was a challenge for Alice to define herself through her family. She was the subject of much teasing, both affectionately and through childish sibling rivalry. Her brothers mocked her openly about her character and appearance with expressions of affection that could only confuse her developing self-image. For example, when she was twelve William wrote verses in her honour and read them out before an audience, setting himself as a suitor ready to die for the impossible dream of marriage with “My Alice sweet” with her “childlike form” and “golden hair.”⁹ In his descriptions of her, Alice remained too small and sickly to perform the expected female role of angelic nurse tending the sick family in the manner of their beloved mother and aunt. At less tender moments, he would criticise her

⁸ Edward Waldo Emerson, *The Early Years of the Saturday Club 1855-1870*, (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918). Cited in *TCWJI*, 171-172.

⁹ WJ to HJ Sr., (Unknown date, 1860), *Corr. IV*, 27.

ignorance and inaction. As we shall see later, William, who was not only her eldest brother but also a psychologist with a MD, continued to provide Alice with images related to medical discourse. Alice learned to react against his teasing; their relationship was basically composed of stinging communications and an inseparable emotional tie.

Of all her brothers, Alice understood Henry as the most sympathetic. As neither of them married, their relationship remained close enough for Henry to help her through her last years in England. On the one hand William and Henry were so close that their thoughts often became fused, on the other hand the second son and the only daughter shared the difficulty of living beside William. Henry once wrote how difficult it was to find a place in the family alongside William, who was “occupying a place in the world to which I couldn’t at all aspire,” continuing:

...as if he had gained such an advance of me in his sixteen months’ experience of the world before mine began that I never for all the time of childhood and youth in the least caught up with him or overtook him. He was always round the corner and out of sight, coming back into view but at his hours of extremest ease. We were never in the same schoolroom, in the same game, scarce even in step together or in the same phase at the same time; when our phases overlapped, that is, it was only for a moment— he was clean out before I had got well in.¹⁰

Henry had to face the world previously lived in by William. Henry and Alice were both conscious of their fate of always living in the shadow of their eldest brother. In fact, Alice was in the shadow of both William and Henry, as well as that of the two youngest brothers. As a result she came to have her own self-image under their influences by accepting her status in the family. She had a difficulty to persuade the family of her own feeling and thoughts against her passive situation; her repeated breakdowns seem to represent an affirmative expression of this passivity. In Alice’s reminiscences, we can see her ambiguous feelings towards her

¹⁰ Henry James, *A Small Boy and Others*, 7-8.

mother, who was born to a Calvinist family and learnt to be a mother from her own mother. For Alice, sickly and unmarried, things did not go as they had for her mother, in either learning or practicing the expected female role.

Henry Sr encouraged his children's moral education by way of intellectual communication, as we saw in the previous chapter, for example in his discussions with William on aestheticism and spirituality. Although he was opposed to too much academic education for females, he thought differently of their spiritual development, and took a similar attitude in this regard to his wife Mary as he did to Alice. When Alice read her parents' correspondence in 1882, seven or eight years after their death, she wrote: "The letters are made of the daily events of their pure simple lives, with souls unruffled by the ways of men, like special creatures, spiritualized and remote from coarser clay." On her mother, Alice wrote: "Mother's words breathe her extraordinary selfless devotion as if she simply embodied the unconscious essence of wife and motherhood."¹¹ Other family members also wrote about Mary's extraordinary devotion to her family by means of the self-sacrifice.¹² Indeed, Henry Sr believed that women should be strictly bonded to their families and defined in terms of this role. Despite Alice's mixed feelings towards this opinion and her mother's compliance with it, in middle age she appreciated her parents' communication, in which Henry Sr explained to Mary his thoughts on family, in order to help improve her and their children's spiritual states through their duties. This was the kind of idealised marital relationship that she would never have, and the idealised side of her father she also opposed.

Henry Sr formed a family closely tied under his belief for education and morality. When their brother Henry settled in England, William wrote to Alice that Henry was "a native of the James family, and has no other country."¹³ The same thing could be said to William himself and Alice, who had also grown up and whose moral sense was rooted deeply in this James country. But in their younger days, the family's frequent travels in the quest for education gave the children an uneasy sense of uprootedness in terms of social and territorial relationships.

¹¹ Alice James, (January 29, 1890), *The Diary*, 79.

¹² Jean Strouse, *Alice James; a Biography*, 25-26.

¹³ WJ to AJ, (July 29, 1889), *Corr. VI*, 517.

Although the journeys strengthened their family tie, by the very this reason, it led to a terrible “homesickness,” as Alice wrote to her father and eldest brother.¹⁴ Alice’s comment to William, who frankly showed an attachment to the family as did his father, could seem to imply that contrary to them Alice found herself at a distance from her family. She was uprooted in a double sense from her ‘home’ : her family and her country.

Although Alice never left home except for periods of travel or therapeutic treatment, her impeccable mother was not a model for her to be able to follow. She rather would inevitably have reminded of Alice’s another impossibility. The influence of Mary, who grew up in the Calvinist tradition, was as considerable as that of their father, and she raised them with a strong sense of practicality. When the children were very young their education was left entirely to her, and because of their long periods of travel and ill health, the time under her protection was prolonged. Their open praise for her perfect mothering was often combined with ironic quips about her and their father’s tendency to meddle in their affairs.¹⁵

However, Mary was not the only woman who supported the family. Their aunt, Catherine Walsh, also lived and travelled with them, helping Mary in her maternal role.¹⁶ Aunt Kate, as she was known, accompanied Alice on her travels, including her grand trip to Europe in 1872. Having two women in the house, almost as if there were two mothers, and two wives for Henry Sr, must have been complicated for the Jameses. However, Aunt Kate gave Alice another female role model; a divorced woman with no children who devoted herself to a surrogate family and who also, crucially, held a different political opinion from Alice’s father. With the help of these women, despite her sickness, Alice was able to develop her feminine, daughterly role alongside her intellect, which emerged through her correspondence with the other members of her literary family as she supported them on their various

¹⁴ Alice James, (November 16, 1889), *The Diary*, 56.

¹⁵ Strouse pointed out it was after the death of her mother that Alice could accept her ideal mother as really truly ideal, by quoting her words as saying: “Instead of having lost her it seems as if I had never known or loved her before.” Strouse, 203.

¹⁶ Aunt Kate married once and divorced. Henry Sr wrote at the moment of her living for the marriage, “Aunt Kate has always been a most loving and provident husband to Mary, a most considerate and devoted wife to me, and an incomparable father and mother to our children.” Letter from HJ Sr to Edmund Tweedy, probably in 1853, cited in Strouse, 333.

journeys. We could find one of the origins of her diary writings in her family communication, even though in these she was mostly reserved in her reactions.

Writing to her family and friends was one of the most positive activities in Alice's early life. When her family moved to Boston, Alice was finally able to enter a female circle through the schools and women's social groups, and it was a rare energetic period during her life of illness. The friends she made were mostly the daughters of established New England families; she visited their homes and they would write to each other.¹⁷ However, she had a tendency to deprecate herself and often wondered whether or not she was truly deserving of her friends' affection¹⁸. It was awkward then, when her admiration of them was often changed to disappointment when the women became engaged with undeserving men (from Alice's point of view). Still, it was her few friends of this period who supported her throughout her painful life. According to Strouse, "Alice's sense of her adult self derived much more from her relations with other women than from her relations with men."¹⁹

Alice worked at the Society to Encourage Studies at Home, a correspondence school for women founded in 1873 by Anna Eliot Ticknor. In fact, this was the only paid job in Alice's life.²⁰ The Society sent educational materials through the mail to women who had not had a chance to study. Alice herself taught history, sending more than thirty letters per month on the subject. She wrote to a friend in London about her role: "We who have had all our lives more books than we know what to do with can't conceive of feelings that people have for them who have been shut out from them always. They look upon them as something sacred apparently... Now

¹⁷ For example, Frances Rollins Morse at Ms Clapp's School, then Sara Sedgwick in the Female Human Society of Cambridge, where she participated with her mother. About the background of Alice's friendship in Bostonian Community see Jean Strouse, "Bostonians" in Strouse, 85-96.

¹⁸ Strouse analyses Alice's fear in her friendship due to its importance in her letter to Morse (February 4, 1866), *Ibid.*, 92-93.

¹⁹ Strouse, 168.

²⁰ William James tried to give her an assistant job at the Museum of Comparative Anatomy where he worked. WJ to HJ (November 14, 1875), *Corr. I*, 241-242. Although the reason is uncertain, she did not take it. She might not have rejoiced in the laborious work for her brother. The female relatives of the scientist often devoted themselves to support his work in making the atlas. According to Daston and Galison, female servitude to male scientists was due to historical hierarchy in the practice of science where artists came to submit to naturalists in order to realize naturalists' view. See Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2010) 88-90.

this is the sort of being that we want to help and that we do help, so I do not see that there can be possible be any harm in it.”²¹ She found her work important for women, and this passionate idealism can be found throughout her later writings about politics.

It was through the Society that Alice met Katherine Peabody Loring, who was head of history there, and who became her companion until her death. As they developed their ‘Boston marriage’ (the nineteenth century term for a close relationship between single women), they spent vacations and travelled to England together.²² When Alice fell into collapse, Katherine cared for her, and this permitted Alice to keep her beloved friend close to her. Henry James, who had helped his fragile sister a lot, was at first glad about her new friendship, but as the relationship grew deeper he became to worry about Katherine’s influence on his sister, fearing he might be losing their intimate ties despite Alice’s troubles. Beside Henry’s uneasiness, she likely rejoiced in the women’s sphere, being separated from her family background. She was, however still anchored in many ways in the Jameses by her illness.

While both Katherine, and Henry supported Alice through her last years, from 1889 until her death in London in 1894, Alice wrote her diaries. After her parents’ death in 1882, Alice had sailed to England with Katherine and never returned to America because of her deteriorating condition. When Katherine returned to America for almost two years to care for her sick family, Alice began to write about the events and memories of her invalid life. She was in solitude at Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, England, a well-known thermal therapy in the nineteenth century, to keep her nerves calm.

Alice’s experience of being seriously ill caused her to examine what was significant in her life, and in her first diary entry on 31 May 1889 she wrote, “I think that if I get into the habit of writing a bit about what happens, or rather doesn't happen, I may lose a little of the sense of loneliness and desolation which abides with me. My circumstances allowing of nothing but the ejaculation of one-syllabled

²¹ AJ to Annie Ashburner, (February 28, 1877), *The Letters*, 80-81. Also cited in Strouse, 176.

²² William’s wife have suggested that their relationship was sexual, and Alice’s will to Katharine.

reflections, a written monologue by that most interesting being, myself, may have its yet to be discovered consolation. I shall at least have it all my own way [...]"²³ She wrote with the resolution to become the author of her own life, but as was usual when she wrote letters, she started to address both herself and the readers (presumably unknown to her) as 'you'. In fact, Alice James started writing her diaries in the pages of the same book in which she had kept notes about her readings since the mid-1880s. In her diaries, she wrote about politics, her readings, England, America and her other experiences. However in the daily process of writing, addressing her words to herself became her style. She tried to relate to public matters as seen from her limited position. Therefore it was a process on the one hand to reinterpret her confused memories of her family, and on the other hand to dare to risk the egocentric interpretation upon social and political matters. It is not clear at what point she wanted her diaries to be read by others as a literary work. In this impossible process to her she tried to make out her own point of view and tried to polish her expressions that we will examine in the next parts.

It is not clear when she first became interested in the idea of publishing her diaries, or even whether she really wanted to publish them. However Katherine, who encouraged her to continue writing, inferred Alice's intention to publish from her ongoing alterations to her texts and her requests to type them up. Katherine made four copies and sent each of them to William, Henry and Robertson, who did not know the diaries existed. The diaries did not worry William; he simply appreciated her humour and felt that they were worthy of being published at some future date.

Henry, on the other hand, was surprised and dismayed, fearing that the diaries' publication would cause him problems by publicising what he considered to be Alice's distorted, simplified and exaggerated version of his private life. He destroyed his copy, blamed Katherine, and wrote of his worries to William. Henry's reaction had the paradoxical effect of drawing more attention to the diaries later. However, he privately admitted that Alice's diaries were worth being publicly recognised; as he once said, "genius is not a private fact: sooner or later, in the

²³ Alice James, (May 31, 1889), 25.

nature of things, it becomes common property.”²⁴ He wrote to William again, saying: “I have been immensely impressed with the thing as a revelation of a moral and personal picture. It is heroic in its individuality, its independence, — its face-to-face with the universe for and by herself — and the beauty and eloquence with which she often expresses this, let alone the rich irony and humour, constitute (I wholly agree with you) a new claim for the family renown....”²⁵

It took almost thirty years until the diary was first published in 1934 at the initiative of Alice’s niece Mary Veaux, Robertson’s daughter.²⁶ The diary was then re-edited by Leon Edel, a specialist on Henry James, and published again in 1964. With the story of Henry’s reaction, in spite of its belated publication, *The Diary of Alice James* came to be seen as a work of the James family, as well as the notes of a struggling patient and, importantly, the feminist awakening of a Bostonian woman in the nineteenth century. In her work Alice might have paid “too much attention for herself,” as Diana Trilling put it, relating Alice to her much-admired Emily Dickinson, and what they desired through their subjective writing was “the life of public recognition” as what they couldn’t receive enough during their life.²⁷ However, this still remains to be examined in the context of her entangled relation with her brothers, who established their own vision about the self-consciousness.

2.2 The Difficulty of Writing about Oneself

As not only her brothers but also later critics admitted regarding the individuality of Alice’s writing, it is obvious that she was able to express herself in her own style. Raymond Bellour’s comments seem to express the character of Alice’s text best. Inviting the reader to associate her diaries with another famous imaginative story with the name of ‘Alice’, Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in the Wonderland*, he suggests the

²⁴ Henry James, “The letters of Eugénie de Guérin,” *Notes and Reviews*, (Cambridge MA: Dunster House, 1921), 209-18. Cited in Strouse, 275.

²⁵ The letter of HJ to WJ (May 28, 1894), *Corr. II*, 313. Cited in Strouse, 323.

²⁶ Alice James, *Alice James: Her Brothers--Her Journal*, ed. Anna Robeson Burr (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1934).

²⁷ Diana Trilling, “Alice James,” in *Nation* 156, no. 2, (January, 1943): 61.

fictive creativity of her text; “it is true that without a story after all her name give an highly autobiographical impression, even though autobiography is there a dream.”²⁸ This comment reminds us how the process of writing an autobiography is an entangled one. The concept of autobiography itself may be a contradiction: it is not simply a record of ‘facts’, just as fiction cannot be said to contain no facts about the life of the writer. As Alice manifests that she will write “about what happens, or rather doesn't happen,” the difference between them became blurred in writing about her life, and then the events that are to be told as her experiences in her story. However, this creative process of making a narrative is inseparable from the observational description of one's life events. What shows Alice's effort to continue her diaries and how this habit helped her self-understanding?

Feminist readers have focused on the difficulties Alice encountered in the process of subjectification and regaining agency as she wrote about herself in an oppressive situation, under the domineering influence of both her father and her elder brother William, who resembled her father. In much the same way as her biographer Strouse, Alice wrote of her illness in resistance to contemporary discourses on ‘hysteria’, theorising that it was caused by a battle between cultural and social demands on women (traditional femininity as a patriarchal norm) on the one hand, and the independence and individuality of the female self on the other hand. However, if William James had tried to build a new perspective by re-examining the traditional viewpoints of hysteria as the basis of his explanation of her ailments, it would be too hasty to polarise their viewpoints into an imbalance of power, with his masculine ‘scientific’ and ‘medical’ assessment pit against that of his female sister/patient. Indeed, Alice's ironic and irritated attitude towards her brother can be seen as a form of resistance to the power that he held as a qualified doctor, a successful psychologist and the eldest James son. To see the range of Alice's views on ‘self-consciousness’, it seems that the framework of William's work in relation to Alice remains to be examined without identifying him with ‘the doctors’ in general who were considered to support the main discourses about the

²⁸ Raymond Bellour, “Double Vie” in Alice James, *Journal et choix de lettres* (Langres: Café Clima, 1984), 270.

mental disorders.²⁹ First, we will examine her self-description as a form of rebellion by looking at the influence of medical discourse and her family relationships. Second, we will re-examine her ironical self-description as a process of establishing her thoughts for herself.

In her first diary entry, cited above, Alice directly expressed her intention to write about her life, but it was rather exceptional in the midst of her ironic self-disparagement. She tried to write about her personal experiences, which no longer existed except in her memory. For Alice, in her writer's solitude, her experiences seemed not have any relation to the outside world and, in the absence of external witnesses, seemed even to lack actuality or truth. In the early days of *The Diary* she wrote, "I have seen so little that my memory is packed with little bits which have not been wiped out by great ones, so that it all seems like a reminiscence and as I go along the childish impressions of light and colour come crowding back into my mind and with them the expectant, which then palpitated within me, lives for a ghostly moment."³⁰

The existence of her experiences was often threatening even to herself unless she put them into words. However it was not only because of her situation; Alice's text seems to tell us how difficult it is to make an experience one's own with words.

Throughout her life's illnesses, Alice James was a patient under the eyes of Medicine. She was a case, an example, an object of scientific inquiry with mysterious symptoms to be diagnosed. When she fell into her series of illnesses in the late 1860s, her mother described her as "a case of genuine hysteria for which no cause as yet can be discovered. It is a most distressing form of illness, and the most difficult to reach, because so little is known about it."³¹

In the history of mental pathology, this was a time of much research into hysteria: the French neurologist and anatomical pathologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893) had just started his research on neurology at the Salpêtrière hospital in

²⁹ One of most influential American works on this aspect was by George Miller Beard (1839-1883), who focused on the social and cultural causes of mental tensions along with the progression toward the city life. George Miller Beard, *American Nervousness, Its Causes and Consequences: A Supplement to Nervous Exhaustion (Neurasthenia)* (New York: GP Putnam's Sons, 1881).

³⁰ Alice James, (June 16, 1889), *The Diary*, 34.

³¹ MWJ to GWJ (April 5, 1868? [sic]), Cited in Strouse, 123.

Paris by examining women with symptoms of hysteria. It was also still far in advance of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), whose analysis might have found another interpretation for her symptoms — headaches, stomach pain, leg paralysis, abrupt attacks and neuralgia — than her strong intellectual curiosity. Therefore, Alice was given no explanation for her suffering other than the vague diagnosis of hysteria.

Alice, the patient with mental disease, was an object of classification, and of diagnosis in the clinic; in fact, she had repeatedly been treated by male doctors even with their experimental treatments.³² She wrote to William about her doctor, “I was much disappointed by his lack of remedial suggestions, all great doctors are chiefly interested in the diagnosis & don’t care for anything else apparently. They ought to have a lot of lesser men, like tenders, to do their dirty work for them, curing their patients etc. I shall let you know if he tells me anything interesting, I am much afraid that it won’t be immediate dissolution but on the contrary a long drawn out process.”³³ Still, with the time and energy she spent seeking understanding of her illness, her self-understanding was further suspended. It caused her a vague unease, which was finally realised when she was diagnosed in May 1891 with the breast cancer that eventually took her life. She wrote, “Ever since I have been ill, I have longed and longed for some palpable disease, no matter how conventionally dreadful a label it might have, but I was always driven back to stagger alone under the monstrous mass of subjective sensations, which that sympathetic being ‘the medical man’ has had no higher inspiration than to assure me I was personally responsible for, washing his hands of me with a graceful complacency under my very nose.”³⁴ In other words, she had spent the period of ill health as usual without knowing that it was due to the cancer. Although she wrote more about her health in terms of the progress of cancer, her uneasiness in experiencing a long-period of ill health disappeared; rather, she had learned enough how to listen what doctors say without rejecting or depending on them all. When she describes the doctors’

³² One of her trials was a therapeutic exercise called ‘motorpathic treatment’ by Doctor Charles Fayette Taylor in New York in 1866. He explained that one of the causes of depressed bodily functions in women was their too-early exposure to intellectual and emotional stimulation, which interfered with tissue-making. Strouse, 107.

³³ The letter of AJ to WJ, (December 23, 1884) in Alice James, *The Letters*, 105.

³⁴ Alice James, (May 31, 1889), *The Diary*, 25.

‘washing his hands of [her]’, she consciously takes a distance from him as if she is protecting her own experience, including the pain caused her by tumor diagnosed as such.

The concept of a mental pathology could not help her to understand her situation. Although there is her complicated relation with doctors that we will see later, it reveals the consequences of an unbalanced power relation between the individual’s life and the medical discourses into which the former is reduced unilaterally. It is difficult to keep a distance from these discourses once one has fallen into an unmanageable illness.

Concerning the doctor-patient relationship, Michel Foucault (1926-1984) criticized the epistemology in modern medicine: he forms two postulates about the nature of illness applied to both mental disease and organic disease. First, the essentialist prejudice that “illness is an essence, a specific entity that can be mapped by the symptoms that manifest it, but that is anterior to them and, to a certain extent, independent of them.” Second, the naturalist postulate, to support the abstraction in the first, “saw illness in terms of botanical species; the unity that was supposed to exist in each nosographical group behind the polymorphism of the symptoms was like the unity of a species defined by its permanent characteristics and diversified in its subgroups.” These postulates consider illness as “a natural essence manifested by specific symptoms,” and were applied to both mental and organic symptoms as a principal attitude of “métopathologie” under unity. As a result, the essentialist’s point of view of métopathologie prevents us to consider the unity of to see the unity of human being in the relationship between body and mind. According to Foucault, because of this epistemology, medicine had come to see a patient as only an “abstract segmentation” without considering the “development of the individual patient.”³⁵

However no verifiable unification was possible for a person suffering from ‘hysteria’ in the late nineteenth century. Awaiting a diagnosis for her multiple symptoms, Alice experienced this “abstract parallelism” leaving “the real unity of

³⁵ Michel Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 6-7.

human and of the psychosomatic totality.”³⁶ Her suffering moved around her body, remaining fragmented without rational explanation by doctors. Instead, it was Alice who gave voice to her fragmented self through absurd pains.

To examine her fragmented self, once again we need to see her marginalised position in the family. As we have seen, because of her brothers’ teasing and despite Henry’s gentleness, Alice grew up finding it difficult to tell her experiences to the family. As the youngest, her simple daily discoveries were seen by them as meaningless, second-hand news. For example, she wrote that when she mentioned to William about something she had read, he told her that he had read it yesterday and then passed over her comments.³⁷

Missing an appreciation of her originality, she sought her own ‘first-timeness’ by perceiving her experience through her own awaking self-consciousness. To explain it, she wrote down her memories alongside Henry (not William as usual), and she recalled the moment she first felt her “purely intellectual process” on sharing Henry’s words. It awakened her sense of self, in which she felt pride.³⁸ She could always be more relaxed when she was with Henry. Henry was close and helpful to her, and it was also true that Alice’s presence gave him consolation in her attention to him. Nevertheless, she complained once that Henry ignored her ‘first-timeness’ and originality. When she observed the characteristics of the English, she wrote: “H. is always saying this, but it jumped at my eye from the first, and is therefore original if not unique utterance. H., by the way, has embedded in his pages many pearls fallen my lips, which he steals in the most unblushing way, saying, simply, that he knew they had been said by the family, so it did not matter.”³⁹

As Alice’s activities outside the home were limited by her illness, she constructed her experience by absorbing conversation in the home, but as her remarks were easily passed over, her understanding was marginalised. It may be true that she just felt ‘ghostly’ accumulating her fragmental findings, feelings and

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁷ Alice James, (June 18, 1890), *The Diary*, 127.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 127-128.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, (June 17, 1891), 212.

reflections inside her as if they did not happened. By this very reason, did she abandon seeking her first-timeness as a proof of her authenticity long ago?

The sense of her existence lacking importance could also be found during the Civil War, when her youngest brothers went to the battlefield and the elder two wondered deeply about their lack of participation. Alice later wrote of her young self as assimilating lifelessness:

Whilst the blank youthful mind, ignorant of catastrophe, stands crushed and bewildered before the perpetual postponement of its hopes, things promised in the dawn that the sunset ne'er fulfils [sic]. Owing to muscular circumstances my youth was not of the most ardent, but I had to peg away pretty hard between 12 and 24, "killing myself," as someone calls it — absorbing into the bone that the better part is to clothe oneself in neutral tints, walk by still waters, and possess one's soul in silence.⁴⁰

Richard Warrington Baldwin Lewis described the Civil War as "the long American moment when history seemed to her a matter exclusively for men," and even though Alice participated in the women's war support activities, she still felt a distance as a woman and felt rather absorbed in herself.⁴¹ Although there was not the same option for her as her brothers had in their commitment to society by fighting (physically) for the cause with their own conscience, she tried to keep her relation to the self by being apart from the society where her voice was ignored. This entry seems to follow Emerson's concept of self-reliance: it would be a kind of act of suicide in that war era to present indifference to the important social event, however she recalled her young neutrality by suspending her action as being herself; it could be rather a moment to listen her inside voice rather than for

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, (February 21, 1890), 95.

⁴¹ Richard Warrington Baldwin Lewis, *The Jameses: A Family Narrative* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1991), 146. Alice joined the Newport Women's Aid Society with her mother at Newport, then the Bee at Harvard, organised by the wife of Asa Gray with fifteen young women in Cambridge to sew and send fabric goods to the army and the hospital. About Alice's activity at the Bee see Strouse, 132-143.

self-indulgence.⁴²

Her memories are recalled with inevitable duality between the written self and the writing self, resisting the placement of their situation as a simple event in the past. For example, in February 1892, about a month before the end of her life, the severely afflicted Alice wrote of a crisis of insufferable emptiness in 1878, when William became engaged to and then married his sister's namesake, Alice Howe Gibbens, a woman chosen for him by his father.⁴³ This event caused Alice James much confusion and a strong feeling of loss, since her brother had always expressed such deep affection and yearning for her attention. The attack was harsh and it lasted for years, and Alice wrote of her sense of uselessness and passivity as a kind of death: "I have been dead so long and it has been simply such a grim shoving of the hours behind me as I faced a ceaseless possible horror, since that hideous summer of '78 when I went down to the deep sea, its dark waters closed over me, and I knew neither hope nor peace; that now it's only the shrivelling [sic] of an empty pea pod that has to be completed."⁴⁴ She expressed her experience at a distance once again with the metaphor of water that might take her away out of her consciousness.

Despite his role in her illness and suffering, Henry Sr often sought to dilute her anxiety on an intellectual level with his own interpretations. Alice once told her father of her desire to commit suicide and asked him whether it would be a sin. He replied that she had a right to suicide if it really seemed necessary in order to escape from her sickness, but only if it was done gently so as not to harm her friends⁴⁵. In

⁴² Emerson uses the term "neutrality" at the beginning of his well known essay "Self-Reliance" meaning both the a healthy innocence of a boy and the ideal attitude for a man. As for the latter, he considers that solitude permits one to establish one's own belief in oneself in a society where people observe each other in a certain manner. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance" in *Self-Reliance and Other Essays*, ed. Stanley Appelbaum (1993; New York: Dover Therift Editions), 21.

⁴³ Henry Sr. met AHJ in 1876 at the meeting of the Radical Club in Boston (1867-1880), organized as a Transcendentalist movement to share the opinions on education and scientific matters; the lectures at the club have been published. RWB Lewis, *The Jameses: A Family Narrative* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1991), 270. About their essays, see Mary Elizabeth Fiske Sargent. *Sketches and reminiscences of the Radical Club of Chestnut Street, Boston* (Boston: J.R. Osgood and Company, 1880).

⁴⁴ Alice James, (February 2, 1892), 230.

⁴⁵ HJ Sr. to RJ (September 14, 1878), cited in Strouse, 185-186. Although there were no evidence Alice had tried to commit suicide in decisive way, the idea had attracted her strongly and repeatedly in her younger days. Strouse, 187.

other words, he did not respond to her urgent question but instead to a general one. We cannot know how Alice received his response at that moment, but she would surely have internalised his vision. And she may have been disappointed: it could be that she wanted to hurt her father with her suggestion of suicide, whilst knowing that he would consider it sinful and she should submit to his condemnation of it. In other words, she might have known their conversation could become nothing but rhetorical. In any case it is clear that her rebellion was strongly emotional and it provoked physical pain. Of her earliest attacks of hysteria, she wrote:

As I lay prostrate after the storm with my mind luminous... I saw so distinctly that it was a fight simply between my body and my will, a battle in which the former was to be triumphant to the end. Owing to some physical weakness, excess of nervous susceptibility, the moral power pauses, as it were for a moment, and refuses to maintain muscular sanity, worn out with the strain of its constabulary function. As I used to sit immovable reading in the library with waves of violent inclination suddenly invading my muscles taking some one of their myriad forms such as throwing myself out of the window, or knocking off the head of the benignant pater as he sat with his silver locks, writing at his table, it used to seem to me that the only difference between me and the insane was that I had not only all the horrors and sufferings of insanity but the duties of doctor, nurse, and strait-jacket imposed upon me, too.⁴⁶

She describes herself here as being worn out by the violent unpredictability of her desires, but more troublesome still was the dual burden of insanity and her duty to repress it. Yoko Funasaka focused on the idea that Alice fictionalised Henry Sr into a stereotypical image of fatherhood, a “benignant pater” sat at his desk with his patriarchal knowledge and “silver locks” that is different from his portrait in the photograph.⁴⁷ In this reading, Alice wanted to take distance from her status as a

⁴⁶ Alice James, (October 26, 1890), *The Diary*, 149.

⁴⁷ Yoko Funasaka, “Kaku jiko to kakareru jiko: Jiden toshite yomu Alice James no nikki” [Writing

daughter and a sister of the Jameses who repressed her; in relation to this rhetorical father, she too became an abstracted figure; a caricature open to ridicule. In fact, with this approach, Alice was able to split into a written self and a writing self, with a detachment that permitted her to switch from her marginalised position to being the author of her story. However, the writing self is another fragmented self.

Although Alice was surely a writer with enough self-awareness to be able to keep a sense of detachment from her situation, it is worth remembering that her illness was serious enough to keep her confined to her bed for fear of unexpected further breakdowns or pain. Her uncontrollable nervous attacks alienated her from her own self. Writing about these nervous attacks may have been an attempt to protect herself from them. For example, she described one of her crippling headaches as follows: “I collapsed too for a few days and cultivated as much ‘prostration’ as possible but all in vain, the little beasties are too wise to think that they can make a feast off the pale fluid that stagnates in my veins, so I shall drag on a bit longer.... ’Tis rather droll tho’ that my having a few more head-aches should be essential to be the development of the race.”⁴⁸ To explain the unbearable pain, she explained the extent of sufferance as beyond individual experience. Or, during another headache she wrote, “What a grotesque I am to be sure!” Here is a continual deterioration of her self-image in her absurd battle. Another time she wrote that she felt “like a Barnum Monstrosity, which had missed fire” because her attack of hysteria was a spectacle for her visitors and she became an object of their curiosity and sympathy.⁴⁹

We have seen how difficult it was for her to write or speak about her experiences as her own because of her feeling of alienation and fragmented understanding of others, as well as the limitations of a life spent confined to the sickroom. However, she represented herself with ironical inspection by looking on her fragmental and confusing understandings, then she recomposed her world of

Self and Written Self: Diaries of Alice James as an Autobiography,] in *Tekusuto no chihei: Mori Hideharu Kyoju koki kinen ronbunshu* [Horizon of Text: Essays for the Age of Seventies of the Professor Haruhide Mori], ed. Takao Tomiyama (Tokyo: Eihosha, 2005), 228-229.

⁴⁸ Alice James, (March 3, 1890), *The Diary*, 96.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, (December 2, 1889), 63.

experiences. Representing her different selves from various points of view, it seems as if she was protecting her story from others: her doctors, her brothers, her easy, sympathetic visitors. But does this mean she was hoping to recover a sense of totality in her life? In other words, did she want to present herself as a unified self in the telling of her experiences? She did not attempt to establish one stable viewpoint to tell her life in a chronological timeline. In fact, telling her private experiences in full was a way of tracing the relationships between all her fragmented selves, including her writing self of the moment. In other words, she tried to describe her internal relationships as a way of concentrating on her life, not necessarily in relation to what was normal. Alice's *Diary* reveals that to write about oneself as an almost impossible project might be possible, if one could write about it including one's relation to oneself through radical re-examination of the premises on which the relation between subject and object in one's life story are founded. Alice grasped the instability of a writing self being at the same time a written self, and then its dynamism by adding another self who may transform the first relation. She continued to write about herself, only if she could cling to this change of consciousness by writing.

2.3 Questions on the Unity of Self

Her image of self is possible to be read with the history of psychology in those days, which had been advanced as a natural science by experimental psychology. Although Jean Strouse's work remains until now the only comprehensive biography on the life of Alice filled with detailed historical documents about the James family, her feminist reading sees Alice's text as a process of subjectification in a male-dominated society; acquiring individuality through her own status as an invalid could almost be regarded as her "mortal career."⁵⁰ In this process, as for Alice's relationship with William, Strouse insisted on Alice's social status rather than their close communication as a shared experience in the James family. As a

⁵⁰ AJ to WJ (December 23, 1884), *The Letters*, 193.

result, under the shadow of the psychology of that time led by male scientists and doctors (of which William took part), the point of view that emphasizes her authenticity as a writer has a tendency to ignore Alice's delicate but suggestive reaction to him. Confirming the unbalanced relation between doctor and patient related with their sex, Strouse and her followers picked up Alice's long and irritated entries concerning William's essay *The Hidden Self* written on the occasion of the publication of French psychologist Pierre Janet's work *L'Automatisme Psychologique* (1889).⁵¹

Before placing them in a dichotomized relation, one must revise William's essay that responded to one of the landmark works on hysteria in the history of psychology, and by which William was greatly influenced. However, he did not necessary agree with its methodology. We begin with the analysis of William's comments on Janet, which has not been examined well in the reading of Alice's *Diary*. Alice's narration of her experience will be brought more to light in her relationship with William through their common reflection on the idea of self in psychology.

In 1890 James reviewed Janet's work about his patients suffering from hysteria, alienation, and epilepsy in l'Hôpital du Havre in France between 1882 and 1888, which was submitted as a philosophy thesis to the Sorbonne in 1889. He developed his theory on the mental diseases through his study on automatism in his patients and he presented there the concept of "dissociation" and "subconsciousness" that questioned the rigidity of the Unity of Self. This historical work attempted to pursue "experimental and objective psychology" with the method of natural sciences without reducing the spiritual phenomena of patients to physiology.⁵² In order to explain complex and variable phenomena in hysterics, Janet observed "the human activity in the simplest and the most rudimentary forms" of what appeared with both spontaneity and strict regularity that signified "automatic."⁵³ Beside his search for scientific objectivity, the majority of his research was furnished by the

⁵¹ Pierre Janet, *L'automatisme psychologique : Essai de psychologie expérimentale sur les formes inférieures de l'activité humaine* (1889; repr., Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 2005).

⁵² *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

description of his female patients whose names were remembered with his work — Léonie, Lucie, Rose and Marie— and he considered “these four persons, more than other cases, appeared to us satisfying the conditions for a good psychological experience.”⁵⁴

Janet undertook comparative study through cases whose individual history he could learn rather than collecting numerous cases for the quantitative proof. James pointed out about Janet’s “Subjects” that they were observed by their hypnotic states, as well as those of Alfred Binet in the Salpêtrière at the same period in emerging experimental psychology. Basing his observation on the hypnotic states of hysterics sufferers, James pointed out, “the most aggravated forms of hysteria, and both authors, I fancy, are consequently led to exaggerate the dependence of the trance-conditions upon this kind of disease.” Then, he continues, Janet’s four patients were “in charge of doctors who were his friends, who allowed him to make observations on them to his heart’s content.”⁵⁵ He needed to ascertain Janet’s scientific attempt by advocating the norm of objectivity in science.

Anaesthesias and hemianaesthesias are the central interest of Janet’s research among the variable and indefinite forms of hysteria. Janet focuses their extreme symptoms consisting of “alterations of the natural sensibility of various parts and organs of the body.”⁵⁶ Therefore, James focuses on the hypothetical condition that results in Janet’s discovery of subconsciousness through the research. As this concept of ‘anaesthesia’ itself was the hypothesis, James tried here to make the effect of Janet’s operation clear to gain facts to correspond to the hypothesis, which is a sort of collaboration with his patients.

This scheme of Janet’s was rooted in the history of experimental psychology in France in those days, under the recent German experimental psychology and English Associationist psychology. Janet followed Theodule Ribot (1839-1916)’s programme of psychology in the beginning of 1880s called “pathological psychology,” which was opposed to the spiritualist philosophical psychology. In the hospital in Le Havre, Janet had an occasion to pursue his research on the hysteric

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁵ *EPS*, 250.

⁵⁶ *EPS*, 251.

patients with whom he would elaborate the notion of ‘the Unity of Self’ in question. He took over the philosophical question of the Unity of Self, whose existence David Hume could not conclude, and which Taine also rejected as only “the verbal entity and metaphysical ghost [entité verbal et fantôme métaphysique].”⁵⁷ Consciousness and unconsciousness was the central issue in the argument between philosophers and scientists those days: the empirical observation of the scientist on personality in cases of mental problems against the traditional spiritualism based on the soul. Janet tried to verify the nature of the unity in his scientific research as “experimental and objective research.”

Janet’s study on automatism resulted from his view on hysterics, and the insufficiency of “the unifying and synthesizing power” of their Ego. James believed it resulted from his observation and philosophical hypothesis as follows:

The original sin of the hysteric mind, he thinks, is the contradictions of the field of consciousness. The attention has not sufficient strength to take in the normal number of sensations or ideas at once. If an ordinary person can feel ten things at a time, an hysteric can feel but five. Our minds are all of them like vessels full of water, and taking in a new drop makes another drop fall out; only the hysteric mental vessel is preternaturally small. The unifying or synthetizing power which the Ego exerts over the manifold facts which are offered to it is insufficient to do its full amount of work, and ingrained habit is formed of neglecting or overlooking certain determinate portions of the mass. Thus one eye will be ignored, one arm and hand, or one half of the body. And apart from anaesthesia, hysterics are often extremely *distraites*, unable to attend to two things at once.⁵⁸

William’s summary emphasizes Janet’s peculiar explanation about will power by the quantitative aspect and its mechanical exertion. As we will see later, this

⁵⁷ Hippolyte Taine, *D’Intelligence*, (Paris: Hachette, 1878), 343, cited in Jacqueline Carroy and Régine Plas, “La genèse de la notion de dissociation chez Pierre Janet et ses enjeux,” in *L’évolution psychiatrique* 65, no.1, (January-March 1999): 11.

⁵⁸ *EPS*, 251.

view of the weakened will of hysterics was the argument that disgusted Alice and for which she blamed William, believing that he shared the theory. Although Janet was inclined to treat “sub-consciousness” as a general concept, William examined its particular condition.

Janet’s conclusion about the Unity was eclectic, between the empirical research in science and philosophy brought by the hypnotization of Lucie. Her case permitted him to generalize his hypothesis about the subconsciousness. Although he had already observed the “dissociation” of conscious states as the appearance of different characters in one person through the case of Léonie, it was not clear if her different personalities resulted from her hypnotised experience before Janet. Therefore Lucie was the ideal subject he needed. She was in almost total anæsthesia with only slight sight and had never been magnetized by therapists. Lucie, more precisely, her somnambulistic personality Adrienne (Lucie2), became his “instrument of observation” on whom Janet operated the experiments to verify his hypothesis.⁵⁹ As a result, she eventually fell into the third state by Janet’s intervention, which told him the existence of subconsciousness. James summed up this phenomenon:

M. Janet calls this waking or primary (one can hardly, in such a connection, say “normal”) state by the name of Lucie 1. In Lucie 2, her first sort of hypnotic trance, the anæsthesias were diminished but not removed. In the deeper trance, “Lucie 3,” brought about as just described, no trance of them remained. Her sensibility became perfect, and instead of being an extreme example of the “visual” type, she was transformed into what, in Professor Charcot’s terminology, is known as a motor. That is to say, that whereas, when awake, she had thought in visual terms exclusively, and could imagine

⁵⁹ Carroy and Plas (1999): 14; The way hysterics were treated as a tool for the theorization was seen commonly in the psychological research; “The hypnotized subject in as state of cataleptic immobilization or lethargic subjection, to adopt Charcot’s terms, was expected to realize an ideal, that of the decerebrated human laboratory animal reduced to a state of reflex-man or pure automaton. Hypnosis would in the way make it possible to perform what Richet and Beaunis popularized under the term ‘psychological vivisection’.” Jacqueline Carroy and Régine Plas, “The origins of French experimental psychology: experiment and experimentalism,” *History of the Human Science* 9, no.1 (February 1996): 79.

things only by remembering how they looked, now, in this deeper trance, her thoughts and memories seemed largely composed of images of movement and of touch—of course I state summarily here what appears in the book as an induction from many facts.⁶⁰

Lucie's deepest trance, induced by Janet's operation, had acquired a sort of perceptive state in addition to more visual ability, which would permit her to recover her other sensations in the awakened state. James considered that this eventual appearance of the third state guided Janet to find other cases of the same kind of deeper trances including in his other three principal patients. According to James, Janet went on to generalize this phenomenon as a theory that the loss of a certain sensation in hysteric patient happened along with a loss of the way to recollect the sensation lost in anæsthesias. It would support the theory that the awakened conscious state is related with subconsciousness, which will suggest the form of the unity of the self by certain layers of conscious state.⁶¹ In other words, the concept of "dissociation" through subconsciousness was inseparable from his idea of the unity.

James mentioned repeatedly that Janet's interest and his patients' phenomena agreed "beautifully," in the sense that the latter replied to his demands. He pointed out, in contrast to Janet's anticipation, the law of anaesthesia accompanied by "amnesias" will not fit clearly to every individual case. If it were a complete explanation, it was only in the case we could have the "privileged subjects of M. Janet's own."⁶² James commented, "the case of Léonie is the most interesting, and shows beautifully how, with the sensibilities and motor impulses, the memories and character will change," and summarized the case very simply as follows; "Léonie 1 knows only of herself; Léonie 2 of herself and of Léonie 1; Léonie 3 knows of herself and of both the others. Léonie 1 has a visual consciousness; Léonie 2 has one both visual and auditory; in Léonie 3 it is at once visual, auditory, and tactile."⁶³

⁶⁰ *EPH*, 253.

⁶¹ *EPS*, 253-254.

⁶² *EPS*, 254.

⁶³ *EPS*, 257.

By the very reason of this simplicity in her dissociation, he wonders about this agreement of Janet's requirement with her character to theorize the manner of unification of selves.

It was an interesting fact, as James noticed, that Janet believed himself to be 'the discoverer' of Léonie 3, in spite of the fact that she herself knew this condition before his intervention. At first, each of these different states had their proper names; Mme. B... Léonie, Léonitine, Léonore, Janet saw this succession of the appearance of the figures as "the 'theater of the theater' of which the Baroque drama was found."⁶⁴ It is when Janet theorized them beyond metaphorical expression that he numbered them in the hierarchical strata of personality. James wanted to call attention here to the fact that "the trance-state may prepare, not only for the subject but for the operator. For the subject the surprises are often inconvenient enough, especially when the trance comes and goes spontaneously."⁶⁵ Here was the confusing interaction between not only three Léonies but also with Janet as an observer, both of whom tried to keep each other separated and ignorant. James caricatured by retaining metaphorical expression, "One see the possibility of a new kind of "Comedy of Errors," to which it would take the skill of a Parisian vaudevilliste to do justice."⁶⁶ It was the drama made by researchers and their "well-adapted subject"⁶⁷ or "trained subjects".⁶⁸ Although James admitted the importance of the comparative study of trance states in order to verify our sub-consciousness, he questioned the relationship between hypnotizer and subject, on which the variable and unformed existence of mind states depend. In other words,

⁶⁴ Carroy and Plas, (1999): 15.

⁶⁵ *EPS*, 257.

⁶⁶ *EPS*, 258. Carroy and Plas commented about Janet's text on Madame B; "It was as if the main part of the texts went down in the individual and collective history". Carroy and Plas, (1999): 15.

⁶⁷ *EPH*, 261.

⁶⁸ *PP*, 1209. James deals with this problem in the chapter of Hypnotism, *The Principles of Psychology*: "Some subjects seem almost as obedient to suggestion in the waking state as in sleep, or even more so, according to certain observers. Not only muscular phenomena, but changes of personality and hallucinations are recorded as the result of simple affirmation on the operator's part, without the previous ceremony of "magnetizing" or putting into the 'mesmeric sleep.' These are all trained subjects, however so far as I know, and the affirmation must apparently be accompanied by the patient concentrating his attention and gazing, however briefly, into the eyes of the operator. It is probable therefore an extremely rapidly induced condition of trance is a prerequisite for success in these experiments" (*PP*, 1213)

he focuses on the character of the mind state as what is in making with both its own tendency and the interaction between the inward and the outward.

Janet was concerned with confirming his theory as “the law of dissociation” then as the notion of “sub-consciousness.” Jacqueline Carroy and Régine Plas pointed out that Janet’s confusion is due to the formation of the model for simultaneous coexistence of personalities. He thought “many simultaneated and superposed layers of conscious phenomena grouped in the system [corresponding to the] mental states.”⁶⁹ Although it remained imperfect in explaining complex psychological phenomena, nevertheless he developed it enough to imply the unity of Self with his notion of “sub-consciousness,” as parts of consciousness existing around the normal consciousness.

James put Janet’s concepts into philosophical context by relating them to Locke’s thesis on the possibility of having two selves inside one consciousness and the one consciousness recollect them together.⁷⁰ Janet’s demonstration of the “simultaneous coexistence of different personages,” would be admitted in this context as such: “in certain persons at least, the total possible consciousness may be split into parts which coexist, but mutually ignore each other and share the objects of knowledge between them, and— more remarkable still— are complementary.”⁷¹ However, because of the collaborating relation between operator and examinees, by pointing out its methodological problem for the verification, James only accepted this fact on the condition that Janet as clinician tried to provide a recovery for his patients. Then, under this therapeutic purpose, James understood that Janet confined the multiple selves to only the pathological symptoms of hysterics patients. At the same time this will suggest that James considered that the Unity of the Self was a question interested by the side of pure natural science.

James saw the limit of Janet’s thesis on “the total possible consciousness” for

⁶⁹ “Les Acts inconscientes et la mémoire: pendant le somnambulism provoqué” *Revue Philosophique*, 25. 1888. 279, quoted in Carroy and Plas, (1999):16.

⁷⁰ See the chapter of John Locke, Chapter xxvii “Of Identity and Diversity,” in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II.

⁷¹ *EPS*, 261.

the idea of the unity of consciousness of self. How sensations were distributed in a patient and then how different personages scrambled to gain them were conditioned to a certain extent by Janet's suggestion. When Janet tried to hold the idea of 'the unity' in philosophical tradition with synthetic approach to the mind, James emphasized rather the practical side of the establishment of a theory, which reflects the judgment of the experimenter. As far as the subjective aspect is inevitable in the psychological experiments, one needs to describe not only the object but also the relationship between subject and object as far as possible. However, according to what James argued in his essay, it is difficult to describe fully the condition of psychological experiments, for the unexamined belief would be remained in the process of schematization.

James estimated carefully the limit of Janet's experimental method as a sort of collaboration between doctor-scientist and patients. Janet himself knew his experiment was conditioned by his relationship with his patients. Furthermore, he did not consider it to threaten the objectivity of the research. He reported it as "selectivity (*électivité*)" of patient's reactions, which were seen only to their experimenters whom they knew well.⁷² Janet was too preoccupied with the concept of "sub-consciousness" to be clear about the questions James pointed out about his hypothesis and its verification process. He could not fully accept Janet's work, in particular, Janet's intervention for the appearance of the third mind state like Lucie 3 in hypnotism. Therefore, when James admitted the importance of the concept of "sub-consciousness" to be examined more fully for our understanding about spiritual phenomena, he required the methodical development to continue this investigation.

2.4 Alice's Response to William

What was Alice's response to her brother? Alice's comment more acutely revealed their unbalanced relation in the description based on the observer's side. His

⁷² Janet's discussion seen in Chapter IV "La Faiblesse et la force morales", especially 454-455.

comment on Janet irritated Alice. Although James admitted the possible existence of sub-consciousness in even normal people, William kept a distance from Janet's conclusion by his attention to the doctor-patient relationship in the research. William described Janet's notion:

M. Janet holds that it is only possible where there is abnormal weakness, and consequently a defect of unifying or co-ordinating power. An hysteric woman abandons part of her consciousness because she is too weak nervously to hold it all together. The abandoned part, meanwhile, may solidify into a secondary or sub-conscious self. In a perfectly sound subject, on the other hand, what is dropped out of mind at one moment keeps coming back at the next. The whole fund of experiences and knowledge remains integrated, and no split-off portions of it can get organized stably enough to form subordinate selves.⁷³

Though he tried to report about Janet's notion, this part most irritated Alice. Refocusing on the question of a weak will in hysteria that she thought William had accepted, she wrote in her diary:

William uses an excellent expression when he says in his paper on the "Hidden Self" that the nervous victim "abandons" certain portions of his consciousness. It may be the word commonly used by his kind. It is just the right one at any rate, altho' I have never unfortunately been able to abandon my consciousness and get five minute's rest. I have passed thro' an infinite succession of conscious abandonments. ... I had to "abandon" my brain, as it were. So it has always been, anything that sticks of itself is free to do so, but conscious and continuous cerebration is an impossible exercise and from just behind the eyes my head feels like a dense jungle into which no ray of light has ever penetrated. So, with the rest, you abandon the pit of your stomach, the palms of your hands, the soles of your feet, and refuse to keep

⁷³ *EPS*, 264.

them sane when you find in turn one moral impression after another producing despair in the one, terror in the other, anxiety in the third and so on until life becomes one long flight from remote suggestion.⁷⁴

It is worth examining the fact she reacted to the expression of “abandonment”. Having introduced the question of intentional will power, Janet could theorize his philosophical question with empirical data from his patients. However, Alice insisted that she had never lost her consciousness but abandoned it by her will. In order to hold it, she willfully abandoned parts of her body, even her brain, in the storm of attack, considered as the battle between body and will. Writing about her experience of attacks made it possible to retain her subjectivity by grasping her relation to herself. Replying to the explanation of the abandonment of the consciousness, she needed to say how she “abandon[ed] her brains” as well as her body parts. Her last sentence would say that she could not unify her life before the suggestion of doctors as if she was obliged to abandon successively her divided parts of body to respond to their expectations. However, as far as she wrote about it retrospectively, she could testify to her clear consciousness on her relation to her body and her feeling in the midst of the attack.

Although both Alice and the psychologists talk about the same matter that psychology faced at that time, they don’t use the same framework to describe the experience. If Janet’s notion is for his simultaneous observation as a psychologist in general, Alice replied to it by telling retrospectively her lived experience of the same kind of attacks she had experienced for a long time. Her individual understanding could be expressed only later, after the attack. She noticed their slip in the theorization between science and philosophy, which seemed to her to leave behind consequently the reality of hysterics, at least, reality according to Alice. Therefore she harshly attacked the discourse of psychologists. If she used the Cartesian view of the battle, which seemed to her the basic view of a psychologist, it is only to explain ironically about her states understood by them. In other words, the irony was her relation to their discourses.

⁷⁴ Alice James, (October 26, 1890), *The Diary*, 149.

Her sensitiveness did not miss the moral connotation when psychologists explained pathologically the symptoms of hysteria by the lack of this power of will. Seeking the moral meaning is the important part of reconstructing her experiences as we have seen in her conversation with her father. Her writing seems to be even heroic in the battle, however it is with her fear of the unexpected attack behind. As she wrote in the entry of the next day, "I must "abandon" the rhetorical part of me and forego the eloquent peroration with which I meant to embellish the above, on the ignorant asininity of the medical profession in its treatment of nervous disorder," she obsessively tried to explain her distance to her self.⁷⁵ Admitting a certain exaggeration in her writing, she wanted to keep her battle as her own. It went with her rejection of the unilateral understanding by the authoritative knowledge of scientist and the patriarchal order. She battled to hold a moral meaning in her situation by confirming her relation to herself over and over again under the repeated "abandonment" in her self-consciousness.

She claimed generally that the clinical doctors as well as psychologists gave her only complications and asked for futile efforts, of which her brother was a part. It is not the point whether her claim would make sense in the current of psychological research at the time. Beside Alice's irritation against William, she dares to reduce his personality to a symbolically simple role as doctor-psychologist by contrasting him to herself. Her image of William represents her furious resistance against the medical authority at the same time as her secret battle against the patriarchy beyond her family. The readers of Alice's diary have a tendency to accept this image of William as what he was. Therefore the intimate relation between them was often omitted; he also suffered severely from the mental and physical trouble and she rejoiced in his visit to her sickroom in London after long estrangement. Like a certain reductionism of William, we can notice the fictive images of her family, as well as her father and angelic Henry. In her middle aged writing, she became able to write her experiences from her point of view with her words before the discourse of the psychologists. Her family on the one hand made up her personal history; on the other hand, their characters were made as the

⁷⁵ Alice James, (November 7, 1890), *The Diary*, 150.

personages who tell symbolically about the institutional power which surrounded her. Through their formalized images, Alice could talk more generally about her experiences.

Alice caricatured William in her text, composing a personality as a type of doctor based on his personal character. For example, his sympathy to Alice's suffering clearly was contrasted to her understanding of sympathy as the power ignoring her reality. Alice wrote once to William, "I have two very fraternal, sympathetic and amusing letters to thank you for. The fraternity & amusingness are very grateful to my heart and soul, but the sympathy makes me feel like a horrible humbug."⁷⁶ Kristin Boudreau's essay contrasted them in typical way as follows; "William saw it [sympathy] as ensuring the protection of the world's many selves: sympathy enables individuals to look beyond themselves to understand the needs of others and thus to prevent their suffering. ...For William, then, sympathy serves as a healing sentiment." On the contrary, according to Boudreau, Alice could not accept "her brother's custodial version of sympathy."⁷⁷ William mentioned this healing possibility only on the condition that the observers are open to the voice of sufferers to respond to it in an interactive way. It is an effect of the attention under the name of sympathy. Because of this emotional action, he could focus on the relation between Janet and his patients; he saw there a fact that the strong attention to others may change the reality of others. Emphasizing William's emotive character, Alice described a man of science who may disagree with the idea of the objectivity. This went with her reaction to the explanation of the hysterics' experiences by psychologists. Being inside their scientific system, she noticed a sort of fiction imposed upon her in the process of theorization.

There were multiple aspects of her writing. She did not write her diary only for the battle as a women patient, nor it is same as the case of Léonie who barely learned a minimum level of writing from Janet as his patient. It is impossible to reduce her individuality to the representative case in the historical and cultural contexts or only to put it into the dichotomy of the observer and the observed or that

⁷⁶ Letter of AJ to WJ, (September 10, 1886), *The Letters*, 122.

⁷⁷ Kristin Boudreau, "A Barnum Monstrosity: Alice James and the Spectacle of Sympathy," in *American Literature* 65, no.1 (March 1993): 55.

of the knower and the known. Alice was deeply in the culture of the James and New England intellectuals with her family. Her understanding of individuality was not only formed by her experience as the hysteric patient. Under the influence of the Emersonian ideal of self-reliance, she sought her own way to relate herself to her difficult situation. The fictionality helped it. What made up her reality was a highly literary ability to describe herself. If her self-understanding was intrinsic to the technically developed discourses, and if creative writing is a part of their familial conversation, it will not make sense what part is true in her writing. Just as William and Henry had shared a lot, Henry and Alice did, and Alice and William did as well even though it was nuanced by William's ignorance and Alice's irritation. In terms of social success, Alice's life may not be comparable to her brothers; however, their relations were multi-faceted, and irreducible to one rigid image in the text. We can approach their life today through different kinds of materials consisting not only in the level of fact but also of the fiction. They are tied with each other emotionally as well as intellectually, and their story was intermingled with fact and fiction enough that it is impossible to separate them strictly. Moreover, as they were aware that their thoughts had been developed in their shared life, all of them became more conscious about and interested in individuality.

If individuality is the matter under this entangled reality, then it could be provided by one's plural selfhood. As we will see in the next chapter, William emphasized the plurality of the self in his psychology. Despite Alice's distance from William, she more or less shared this vision; she even developed it her own way through her fragmented experiences. Alice struggled to segment her individual life by writing it as fragmented rather than to seek a unity. If the unifying self is not stable in hysterics, to react to this imposing notion Alice used this theory paradoxically as a way to explain one's relation to the self under the regard of others by writing differently herself.

The fictive aspect of her diary as her simplified relationship to William means that Alice herself could not fully grasp her reality. We try to grasp reality as our own, nevertheless by this very desire our attention ignores other aspects. The personal document around the psychological research on hysteria tells that personal

stories were made under a certain condition: their life story might be written differently from what was recorded. The reading of her text was directed more or less by the reader's interest as the feminists read the possible subjectification in her writing about her impossible subject as hysteria. Or Janet's patients told their own story in a cooperative way to correspond to the hypothesis of Janet by receiving his suggestion. In the case of Alice herself, reacting to the psychologist, she retold her experiences with her creative story only with the detached viewpoint from herself. The studies of Alice lead us to Shoshana Felman's words of today, who worked on the literature of autobiography with the method of psychoanalysis; "in spite of the contemporary literary fashion of feminine confessions and of the recent critical fashion of "feminist confessions," I will suggest that *none of us, as women, has as yet, precisely, an autobiography.*" Felman explained from her experience how personal history is intertwined with the story of others and could be told with and through others: "Trained to see ourselves, we have a story that by definition cannot be self-present to us, a story that, in other words, is not a story, but must become a story. And it cannot become a story except through the bond of reading, that is, through the story of the Other (the story read by other women, the story of other women, the story of women told by others), insofar as this story of the Other, as our own autobiography, has as yet precisely to be owned."⁷⁸

The fictionality of Alice's voice tells that she told her story through her reading and relating herself in the stories of others. Furthermore, around Alice's diary we witnessed that men also did not always succeed in maintaining their subjectivity: Alice's diary threatened Henry, the cooperative reaction of Janet's patients may have destabilized his project of objective science, and William's serious crisis was often omitted in feminist readings despite its existential significance. As Felman said, although we could think better about ourselves by considering the story of others, it will inevitably be founded on the 'misreading' of others. However, one cannot deny our personal history that is our own life beyond the story. Personal stories such as autobiography or diaries are brought about by the

⁷⁸ Shoshana Felman, *What Does a Woman Want?: Reading and Sexual Difference*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 13.

action between a life and its understanding in a story. Alice's individuality appeared through the way she related herself to experiences before others, in making her story include her 'fictionalized' self.

2.5 Temporality in Telling Personal Experiences

How had Alice James formed her individuality under the condition of her illness? Her experience had fragmented her self-understanding not only from her anesthetic body parts and the convulsions of nervous attacks but also the medical discourses, in addition to her marginal status in the family. As we saw, her story resulted in her challenge to write this relation with others, furthermore, her relation to herself as well as an object of her consciousness. Alice's diary filled with her memories, based on her daily writing with random episodes. *The Diary* with fragmental memories does not have the same temporality as the traditional autobiography consisting of a series of events and experiences in one's long life. It is a sort of compounding self-image. The temporality in her writing reflects her fragmented realities. Her segmented individuality is in contrast to the normative linear time axis penetrating our life from past to the present.

In reading her diary, despite the variety of her topics we find a sort of stagnation in her narrative. She talks repeatedly of the same interests and often uses the same terminology to describe her situation and herself. It explains a tension between her inner mental movement and conceptual time. In her repeated attacks, she said, "Ah, woe, woe is me! I have not only stopped thinning but I am taking unto myself gross fat, all hopes of peace and rest are vanishing, nothing but the dreary snail-like climb up a little way so as to be able to run down again! And then these doctors tell you that you will die, or recover! But you don't recover. I have been at these alternations since I was nineteen and I am neither dead nor recovered—as I am now forty-two there has surely been time for either process."⁷⁹ Her experience of illness neither corresponded to the progress of the organic disease

⁷⁹ Alice James, (September 27, 1890), *The Diary*, 142.

nor to the expected process for the remedy, which basically explained in linear timeline from the beginning to the end. She found herself in the stagnation of time expressed as “neither dead nor recovered.” She continues, “I suppose one has a greater sense of intellectual degradation after an interview with a doctor than from any human experience.”⁸⁰ Complaining to be alienated by the medical diagnosis, she ironically called its effect “degradation” which was neither in the ideological paradigm of progress nor the mainstream of the society. As far as she understood her experience of illness inside the pathological or medical discourses, her reality was in turn “thinning” her body and became useless “gross fat”.

Before growing older Alice could write about her situation at a distance; then, having always failed efforts to get well, she had to accept her everlasting suffering. A desire to kill herself had haunted her as a possible way to get out of it. Ruth Bernard Yeazell interprets the results of the episode with her father about the suicide in less drastic plot through her study on Alice’s *Diary* as well as her letters about thirty years, which helps to see the autobiographical aspects differently. According to her, Alice abandoned her attempt of suicide by having “literally” modified the contrast of the death and life in place of the dramatic end by her will as this: “death would remain an intensely desired end, a goal as well as conclusion, but she herself would not consciously determine the moment of its coming.” It is in this length of the life not the moment of the desire to death, Yezeall attentively read Alice’s attitude toward the male authority in medicine among her repeated harsh compliments; “She would resign her body to its fate, surrender herself to slower and more impersonal rhythms. She still wished to die, but her own will was now to merge with the will of Providence and the physicians.”⁸¹ She might accept to live in a temporality contradictory to her desire for an immediate end, which might be stagnant for her. This temporality as a framework would be emphasized to describe her compromise to her reality through life.

Avoiding the opposition between death and life in terms of her will permits us

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, (September 27, 1890), 142.

⁸¹ Ruth Bernard Yeazell, “Introduction: The Death and Life of Alice James”, in *The Death and Letters of Alice James: Selected Correspondence*, ed. Ruth Bernard Yeazell (1981; repr., Berkley: University of California Press, 1981), 23.

to see her story as an expanded plot of Alice's life without reducing her life to the remarkable battle against her situation. She had constructed her intimate world in order for the very stagnant time to be her own. To tell her experience retrospectively, ignoring the linear progress of life, she used her perspective about the accumulation of time to replace (ironically) the notion of passing time. This is described through her self-image as a coral insect:

“I remind myself all the time of a coral insect building up my various reefs of theory by microscopic additions drawn from observation, or my inner consciousness, mostly. The one that resists the best and is most constantly re-enforces, and against which one has always, in conscience, to close one's eyes,— is that this most excellent people can't harm anything that they don't know; they don't learn things in the air, and by absorbing one of your surfaces they cannot construct you and divine the nature of others.”⁸²

In writing about her memories, there is no superior point of view to unify them at a glance, as in traditional autobiography, which placed the author in the present time to look back at his/her life. The metaphor of “a coral insect” is neither an entity of the Self, unifying life experiences, nor is it the metaphysical unity of partial selves. Without the central nervous system and without mobility, as far as it is living, it continues to grow and transform itself as a whole entity. As Alice evaluated her observations as only minor details, calling them “microscopic,” her self- image was an accumulation of minute experiences. On the one hand this expression sounds ironic when considered alongside science, the important tool of the day; on the other hand, by describing her experience from her point of view, she relativized the knowledge of scientists based on their interests. If, as Yeazell pointed out, her own will had merged with that of the doctors, this self-image has a double meaning: the acceptance of the fragmented selves under the regard of others, and at the same time the expression of her empirical selves. Continuing to be fragmented her experiences and to compounding them, she seemed to reject the idea

⁸² Alice James, (April 7, 1890), *The Diary*, 109.

of the transcendental self to unify her life.

Her life was intertwined with the medical knowledge which treated her, and there was her mixed attitude of loathing and expectation for the remedy. Despite her illness and the temptation to affirm her will by killing herself, Alice held on until she wrote her diaries in her forties. Even if her relation to the doctors was unpleasing, she could not have given it all away. However, by the time of *The Diary*, what the doctors said about her illness no longer manipulated her life. This does not contradict the fact that she accepted with remarkable calmness the diagnosis of cancer from her doctor. This time, she easily understood her life along with the progress of the diseases in a linear time line. She used to understand her life in terms of different types of plots that made up her experiences. Therefore, being at her last weakening period by the cancer, she was conscious about other aspects of her life, which had nothing to do with the temporality of her organic illness. Alice's diary continues to tell her story in a plural plot.

The plurality of Alice's *Diary* is also due to her capricious writing from one topic to another. In addition to her family life, she wrote about international politics from the viewpoint of liberty in humanism and her obsessive observation in the trivial daily matters around her.⁸³ As for this aspect, Bellour's interpretation about "the extreme plasticity of the temporality in her Diary" is suggestive. According to him, her variable interest is a source of the plurality in her narrative by coming and going between subjects by taking a position in her humour as a shield which she had used to protect herself skillfully for a long time. He explains then that "a position" was not defined by the distance between her object and herself, but anchored in herself: "Without the chronological follow-up, it partakes, more than one flow of time, on the creation of a duration: the past rises from the present in a small event, in the point coming to cover up the rest of text by the richness of her

⁸³ Alice was in political affaires between Ireland and Britain. Her grand farther William James I was an immigrant form Ireland. Henry James wrote to William " I find an immense eloquence in her passionate 'radicalism' — he most distinguishing feature almost — which, in her, was absolutely direct and original" then he continued " she was really an Irish woman! — transplanted, transfigured — but none the less fundamentally national —in spite of her so much larger and finer than Irish intelligence." Letter to HJ to WJ (May 28, 1994) quoted in Strouse, 322.

harmonics. And also it is truly a repossession of herself appeared here.”⁸⁴

The autobiographical text may consist not only of factual aspects but also in the record of the way the author alternated his/her attention to another matters. The stagnated feeling of time would disappear by the transition of her attention at the present to set to take place another story. By writing towards this end, and including the way of writing about oneself, we could individualize our story. In other words, it is an aspect of the autobiography as an act of a living person.

This process of individualization is double-sided and will intensify the plurality of text. This alternation of attention depends on both the volitional effort and bodily activity of the writer. The self-consciousness belongs to a living person, in other words, it is conditioned by those who have a body, including a brain and neural activities. Alice wrote about her self-consciousness by being conscious about her body and by representing it in her language. Her body is sometimes an object or a tool of her irony from a distance, but in another moments, she wrote about the appropriation of her body through bodily sensation, with which she perceives her situation at present. Her personal experience is individually in the interactions of her sensations about the body, how she felt, and both medical and common discourses. And the other side of this bodily experience is due to how in the very moment when individualizing her bodily experience with her words she paradoxically confronts her body, which appears as a non-personal organism.

In advancing retrospective reflection, to be attentive to the present is to become more aware our body. The bodily sensation that surges up from body activity will disrupt our attention to an abstract mental image as an idea. If Alice wrote this phenomenon with her dramatic attack of hysteria, in order to see this psychological phenomenon, we can refer to William’s analysis. He thought that we have no sense of empty time because we can’t intuit pure time just as we can’t intuit pure extension; both of them are due to our experience. Inviting his reader to try introspection, James described time perception by our autonomic body activity:

Just as with closed eyes we perceive a dark visual field in which a curdling

⁸⁴ Bellour, 270.

play of obscurest luminosity is always going on; so be we never so abstracted from distinct outward impressions, we are always inwardly immersed in what Wundt has somewhere called the twilight of our general consciousness. Our heart-beats, our breathing, the pulses of our attention, fragments of words or sentences that pass through our imagination, are what people this dim habitat. Now, all these processes are rhythmical, and are apprehended by us, as they occur, in their totality; the breathing and pulses of attention, as coherent successions, each with its rise and fall; the heart-beats similarly, only relatively far more brief; the words not separately, but in connected groups. In short, empty our minds as we may, some form of *changing process* remains for us to feel, and cannot be expelled. And along with the sense of the process and its rhythm goes the sense of the length of time it lasts. Awareness of *change* is thus the condition on which our perception of time's flow depends; but there exists no reason to suppose that empty time's own changes are sufficient for the awareness of change to be aroused. The change must be of some concrete sort—an outward or inward sensible series, or a process of attention or volition.⁸⁵

Time does not flow in the ideal level. The change as 'flow' is not the concept but it is the name for what is caused by body activity at the same time that we notice it. Rather, he tries to see duration among unceasing change as the nature of consciousness. Following E.R. Caly, James called the duration of the present we perceive "the specious present," which will continue only a few seconds, at maximum less than a minute.⁸⁶ He took this specious present as psycho-physical problem. With limited facts, seeking the cerebral process to which the sense of the time is due, James refers to Wundt's explication upon feeling of time-duration; it is caused by "the overlapping of brain process of different phases" as the two perceptions transitively merged in the twilight of consciousness.⁸⁷ James explained this concept of the duration due to the combination of the physiological and

⁸⁵ *PP*, 583-584.

⁸⁶ *PP*, 573.

⁸⁷ *PP*, 600.

psychological facts: on the one hand a certain amount of sensorial stimulation produces some latent activity that fades out gradually, and on the other hand psychologically we have an after-image with a lag in what is left by the original stimulation.

The specious present, rejecting Kantian time concept known immediately by Ego, raises a question about the temporality of experience – how we recollect past experiences in the present. James sees the perception of space and of time as a unit. Past experiences are recalled differently in the present situation to which the recalled images are potentially to be related. We re-experience them at the same time that they are re-experienced in the present. His metaphorical explanation about the double aspect of the specious present suggests this character of recollection: “In short, the practically cognized present is no knife-edge, but a saddle-back, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched, and from which we look in two directions into time. The unit of composition of our perception of time is a *duration*, with a bow and a stern, as it were, – a rearward- and a forward-looking end.”⁸⁸ This “duration-block” is block only separated with vague border, in which it could be related with other durations. The recalling of past experience in the present is understandable in the life of an individual person. With this concept of duration, he repeatedly referenced Kierkegaard’s notion in his later works, “We live forwards, a Danish thinker has said, but we understand backwards.”⁸⁹ This describes the nature of present time open to the past and future through itself, which is different from the series of blocks of present time which make up a timeline. It is also the uniqueness of the present time.

Writing about our personal experiences is the act of understanding of the past by language under the influence of the outer conditions at that time; this act is not only in the context of individual person but also that of objects or of others. It is retrospection in a certain moment. James’s explication of mind activity in the present will emphasize the onetimeness of the act of telling one’s experience. However this onetimeness consists of both a certain contingency to the subject as

⁸⁸ *PP*, 574.

⁸⁹ *P*, 107. Similar expression can be found in *ERE*, 121.

well as more habitual aspects, as far as the recollection is also due to one's way of approaching this experience. Although personal history is always formed in one's particular situation of life, in the latter aspect, there could be a moral exercise for the subject. In the case of Alice, we need to see both aspects of her effort to figure out her own life through her literary ability to describe the interaction between her consciousness and bodily sensation in her proper situation. Her writing about her experiences will revise the static concept of autobiography as one's written life and focus on the dynamism of life in the act of writing.

To finish this chapter, we will analyse an entry of *The Diary* in the following pages. Even though it is most read in the study of her text, it demonstrates well how she is conditioned by her body and by her environment when she writes about herself, then how she was conscious about it. One day after listening to her visitor talk about her moral sentiment in relation to the puritan God, she wrote:

How fatally the entire want of humour cripples the mind. What an awful loss it is that we can't see our own follies, they must be so much more exquisite than any one's else, but as vanity is what keeps the world agoing, after one or two convulsive laughs, the game would certainly be up! Shall I ever have any convulsive laughs again! Ah, me! I fear me not. I had such a feast for 34 years that I can't complain. But a curious extreme to be meted out to a creature, to have grown up with Father and W[illia]m, and then to be reduced to Nurse and Miss C[larke] for humorous daily fodder. Could you but hear the three-lettered chaff which I fabricate for'em, for chaff of some sort I must have.⁹⁰

Rejecting the vision for "the entire" of the deity or human vanity to make up the absurd breaks in one's life, she conceived her life as what forms a world with people around her. She sometimes submits herself there unwillingly, and ignores, or resists the requirement of others. If it seems to lack coherency, she tries to stare at its disjunctures. After this comment on fragmentation of her life, she began to see

⁹⁰ Alice James, (July 7, 1889), *The Diary*, 45.

her solitude in her parents' house after their successive deaths in 1882:

In those ghastly days, when I was by myself in the little house in Mt. Vernon Street, how I longed to flee in to the firemen next door and escape from the "Alone, Alone" that echoed thro' the house, rustled down the stairs, whispered from the walls, and confronted me, like a material presence, as I sat waiting, counting the moments as they turned themselves from today into tomorrow; for "Time does not work until we have ceased to watch him."⁹¹

By mentioning a cliché about time, she explains here the absurdness of the concentration on the pure concept of Time. As we have seen, it is in the painful stagnant moment in her solitude when she knew most clearly that her self-consciousness was forming. Contrary to the notion of passing time, her bodily self has its movement and its interaction with the objects around her. The contrast is expressed by the transgression of their physical feeling. Her inside voice exceeds her body, then what is exterior to her body felt as if it was inside herself; her house became the outline of self-consciousness. The sensation of space appropriates the exterior space to our skin through the enlargement of bodily sensation. She explained the amplification of her solitude through the extension of her inwardness by overlapping her outline on that of the house, which enclosed her in solitude. Alice's text also tells how time and space is a unit, as William says. The consciousness is in transformation; in fact, in the next moment we know that it is toward distinction seen in the metaphor of burning. As far as the object is known to her, as a perception nothing ever lasts.

Recalling is based on the mental image, upon which our consciousness acts. Alice explains that we do not stay with a mental image without concentrating the attention to it - recalling is both active and passive. If she wrote to resist the theory of hysterics' weakened will power, her diary cannot be read as random notes on ephemeral memories. Including the way the topics change one after another, it is rather a description of the act of recalling that depends on the condition of the

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

subject and the present situation, which as a result operate on each time recalling the memory.

In the next moment, regarding memory in her parents' house, she found a symbolical way to take another subject on the wall of house in her mind, "There is a bit of brown wall that always brings up St. John's Wood, so vividly, as I pass— that winter of 1854-1855, all draped in Dec[ember] densities, with only three episodes standing out, as I remember: [...]"⁹²

Alice's diary tells us the nature of one's self-consciousness which is in transition caused by the alternation of one's attention; a memory to another memory, an image to another image, the alteration in the mind does not restricted the spatial composition of the sensible. The change of one group of mental images to another it seems to explain rather a specious present know by the unit of the perception of space and time; Alice's flight from the ever-lasting loneliness, explained the change of the images about the house.

As she followed William's work, despite her dislike of psychologists, her literary expression in the diary will be comparable with the psychological theory of those days. William became a target of criticism but at the same time he remained her important interlocutor. As we have seen, both of them tried to grasp the states of consciousness without presupposing "the unity of Self." Although there is no direct conceptual discussion, it is the theme with which both of them continued to approach in their own way. William wrote about the absurdness of associationist-psychology: "whenever an object of thought contains many elements, the thought itself must be made up of just as many ideas, one idea for each element, and all fused together in appearance, but really separate." His analysis in psychology started from the profound understanding about this problem in the associationist idea related to the unity of an Ego, for "a bundle of separate ideas would never form one thought at all" and the way it "bring[s] the various ideas into relation with each other."⁹³ When he saw in it a methodological fallacy that resulted the mental dust as a by-product of the theory, Alice ironically expressed her

⁹² *Ibid.*, (July 7, 1889), *The Diary*, 45-46.

⁹³ *PP*, 267.

experiences as formed by a “microscopic addition” without mentioning its totality.

What they shared through the reflection on memory is “senses of personal identity” in the recollection, that is to say, the feeling of that “I am the same self that I was yesterday.”⁹⁴ Seeking the way in which each person can appropriate his experiences as his own, they deeply questioned the “I” as a narrator of one’s life. Although Alice and William would not share this question as they did in their life-long conversation with Henry, they tried to describe a feeling of self from a different approach. If Alice challenged it by making her diary as a literary work, William developed his theory about the consciousness of the self with the analysis of autobiographical anecdotes. We will see it in the next chapter.

Alice’s struggle suggests to us the possibility of appropriating one’s own story by writing, to the extent that she related herself to her experiences that could also be told by others. The impact Alice’s text made on her brothers demonstrates how events become memories in the interaction of a personal history with others. The story of the James family tells us both the possibility and the uncertainty of the personal in one’s writing about his/her experiences. Their inquiry for their personal life through writing reveals the non-personal character in our personal experiences. To this point, as Felman says, Alice did not exactly have her own autobiography. However, one’s autobiography is due to the story of others and this is a condition of autobiography. The life of Alice told in the style of diaries led us to revise conceptually what is autobiography.

⁹⁴ *PP*, 315.

Chapter 3: William James's Psychology and The Consciousness of Self

James understood himself first of all as a psychologist; to become a psychologist is to define what psychology is in the very course of the development of psychology as a discipline of a natural science. Led by psychophysiology in German and its international influence, James wrote *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) over the course of twelve years. In the inaugural period of experimental psychology, he confronted a tension between the physiological approach and the philosophical tradition of inquiry of the mind, and he came to question *objectivity* once again as a norm of natural science, a subject on which he raised doubt during his study of natural history and medicine.

It contains an epistemological dilemma in which the life of a psychologist is inevitably to be involved: how to describe the state of consciousness which is not independent from that of the observer. James's psychology continuously reexamined the subjective relation to the observation of the mind. His notion of self-consciousness is a general description about the self but by which he tried to take into consideration of his own self. James tried to describe this reflexive process both by approaches of 'new' physiological psychology and 'old' psychology on the soul¹. James directed his attention to describing how psychologists develop psychology with a new schema of physiological experiments. As the self of the scientist is shaped in the historical context of science, James formed himself as a scientist through the investigation of psychology. His idea of self was a result of a long revision of the methodology.

This chapter will attempt to place his argument about the self within the

¹ Cf. Edward S. Reed, *From Soul to Mind: The Emergence of Psychology, from Erasmus Darwin to William James*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

historical transformation of the epistemic subject: how Darwinian evolutionism had changed his view on the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity through the mind's activity and its interaction with its environment. First, we will see the emergence of the demand for scientific objectivity in the study of natural history, then second, James' harsh criticism of Herbert Spencer's mechanistic vision of evolution in the late 1870s as a criticism of objectivity, and third, his argument on the subjective method as a reaction. These arguments are based on his reception of Darwinian evolutionism. Therefore this chapter will also examine the influence of Chauncey Wright's evolutionary vision on James's concept of self-consciousness (Wright was one of the Darwinist pioneers in the evolutionist arguments in America). Lastly, through James' argument on 'attention' as a faculty, we will trace how he incorporated these arguments in the notion of will as simultaneously corporal and volitional.

3.1 The Methodological Question under the Demand of Scientific Objectivity

James' psychology was intermingled with the observation of the mind and the epistemological question. Psychology in the late nineteenth century confronted rapid transformation of its experimental methods following the development of physiology in Germany. Following this tendency, although he pursued the psychological research as a natural science with the knowledge of medicine, he confronted the contradiction of the inquiry on the mind of the living under the demand of scientific objectivity of the mechanical sciences. Despite this difficulty, James' attempt was not to isolate psychology from other disciplines of natural sciences. It was, on the one hand, a way of clarifying the points of rupture between psychology and natural sciences by examining the arguments that could exceed the subject of the latter. On the other hand, it was a demonstration of the intrinsic philosophical problems between natural science and psychology due to its particular object, that is to say, "the mental states", which "form a practically admitted sort of object whose habits of coexistence and succession and relations with organic

conditions form an entirely definite subject of researches.”² As he said this even after his *Principles of Psychology*, James tried to advance his psychological research by provisionally setting its subject as this. He continued to pose questions: “Cannot philosophers and biologists both become ‘psychologists’ on this common basis? Cannot both forego ulterior inquiries, and agree that, provisionally at least, the mental state shall be the ultimate datum so far as ‘psychology’ cares to go?”³ The organic condition in the material world was due to not only the material world but also the activity of the living mind itself.

Furthermore, James interpreted this entanglement of the mental states as the condition of psychological research based on the ambiguity of the observed and the observer in the research. It was indispensable to consider the mental states of the psychologist himself as what took part of the results of the research. Considering that the subject of psychology could not be approached only by the materialistic view on the mind, James tried to advance psychological research by reflecting on the entangled and ambiguous character of the mind state as the object of observation. In order to lead his readers to this problematic intrinsic to the discipline, James mentions his own feeling about the phenomenon of recollection in the first pages of *The Principles of Psychology*: “When, for instance, I recall my graduation-day, and drag all its incidents and emotions up from death’s dateless night, no mechanical cause can explain this process, nor can any analysis reduce it to lower terms or make its nature seem other than an ultimate datum, which, whether we rebel or not at its mysteriousness, must simply be taken for granted if

² *EPS*, 274. Originally published as “A plea for Psychology as a ‘Natural Science’,” in *Philosophical Review* 1 (Mach 1892).

³ *Ibid.*, 274. He stated in *Psychology: Briefer Course* (1892), the abridged version of the *Principles* as a textbook for students—to whom it was originally considered to address: “we have a lot of beginning of knowledge made in different places, and kept separate from each other merely for practical convenience’ sake, until with later growth they may run into one body of Truth. These provisional beginnings of learning we call ‘the Sciences’ in the plural. In order to not to be unwieldy, every such science has to stick to its own arbitrarily-selected problems, and to ignore all others. Every science thus accepts certain data unquestioningly, leaving it to the other parts of Philosophy to scrutinize their significance and truth.” *BC*, 9. Emphasizing the sciences remained as “beginning” without considering its total system, James tried to find out the psychology in these, the continuity and discontinuity of the disciplines in scientific inquiry. Each science is related by that justified data, “So Physics assumes atoms, action at a distance, etc., uncritically; Chemistry uncritically adopts all the data of Physics; and Physiology adapts those of Chemistry.” *BC*, 10.

we are to psychologize at all.”⁴ As the concept of recollection reveals that memory is not a static object, the objective distance to the mind for observation in unilateral approach could misread the phenomena. Furthermore, our memory of our experiences is recalled neither only outwardly nor only inwardly; depending on both the subjective and objective situation where it is recalled, it might not be always the same. The complex interaction among the subjective and the objective factors may vary what is recalled.

Along with the development of natural sciences in each discipline, until the period James started his study of science in the mid-nineteenth century, scientific research came to require objectivity as the normative attitude. This scientific objectivity is a way of observing facts without prejudice by eliminating systematically the observer’s subjectivity. It was forged and intensified through the course of the development of mechanical science. James focused his interest on the problem due to the attempting at introducing mechanical objectivity for psychology. Trying to define his own attitude as a psychologist toward the object, including his own mind, he tried to revise the subjective aspects in the research and at the same time describe the different aspects of the self. It is significant that James mentioned first the feeling of recollection without excluding himself by taking place as an observer.

The relationship between the scientists and the demands of objectivity had been transformed historically and had influenced the idea of self. On the one hand, knowledge about nature resulted from the way scientists devoted their life to their inquiries, and on the other hand the normative way of science formed the scientific self who pursued the inquiry. As for this historical transformation, Lorraine J. Daston and Peter Galison explained it with the term ‘epistemic virtue’, which is defined as “how science is done and what kind of person one must be to do it.”⁵ They explain the formation of the scientific self through epistemic virtue. The scientific self, as one form of the self, is formed under the influence of both local

⁴ *PP*, 16.

⁵ Lorraine J. Daston and Peter Galison. *Objectivity*, (Zone Books, 2010), 58.

and scientific contexts where scientific groups belonged.

We will briefly follow Daston and Galison's explication about how epistemic virtue historically changed the scientific self by examining their argument. The transformation of epistemic virtue, as far as it directly concerned the period which formed James' view, was marked by the apparition of two different modes: in the first place what is called "truth-to-nature" in the eighteenth century, then "mechanical objectivity" in the first half of the nineteenth century. They explain that these two modes of scientific thought and practice followed the rise of demand of "the exact observation" in the mid-seventeenth century (the century following Francis Bacon's appeal). It tried to overcome "the ingrained tendency of scholastic natural philosophers to generalize rashly from a handful of commonplace examples".⁶ The naturalists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries yearned to collect the abnormalities of nature and required "the exact observation" on the variability and the monstrosity. The accuracy in observation formed an epistemic virtue called "truth-to-nature" that pursued "a science about the rules rather than the exceptions of the nature."⁷ The "truth-to-nature" was realized by a sort of talent of the observer to put a number of observations of individuals into the archetype and at the same time to embody it by the collective work with the atlas makers. In their devotion to the truthful knowledge of nature, the generous naturalist and the skillful artists worked together and regulated each other through their roles. In the vocational requirements and the restraints of scientists themselves, Daston and Galison see the anxiety of the eighteenth century scientists, who hold always a principal place in their works: Dutch anatomist Bernhard Siegfried Albinus (1697-1770) made an engraved image of his ideal skeleton by using the grids and by fixing their best position in order for his skillful artists to trace truthfully his ideal skeleton. In addition to his domination in the work, Albinus also retouched the images.⁸ Swedish naturalist Carl von Linné (1707-1778) required the Almighty in order for botanists to deal with enormous variation; Johann Wolfgang von

⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 74. Albinus worked with Jan Wandelaar who worked with Linné.

Goethe (1749-1832)⁹ tried to systematize observation in series out of fear that generalization from a particular individual would be misleading.¹⁰ This anxiety of the naturalists explains paradoxically what epistemic virtues require and their condition.

Daston and Galison pointed out that the anxiety in “truth-to-nature” dates back to the era of the Enlightenment; developing the idea of self by the continuity of consciousness and memory the philosophers had also experienced the inconsistency of the idea. Despite their idea of continuity, the self revealed by the intensive introspection was “fluid, tattered, and even contradictory identities.”¹¹ Although the unity of self was questioned by Locke and Hume for its plurality as we have mentioned in Chapter 2, the Enlightenment sensualist self was considered to be coherent. Experiencing this precariousness of the self, the Enlightenment philosophers supposed the self could be forged by education based on the idea of *tabula rasa* of the mind. In fact, it was philosophers and scientists themselves who tried to avoid indulgence in imagination and flattering the authoritative knowledge through both observation and education. Their observation should lead reason and judgment by reserving imagination; “Habit was the shield of virtuous, reflecting an ethics more closely linked to regimen and hygiene than the exercise of the will.”¹² Objectivity came to reside both conceptually and habitually in the self of scientists in terms of their will. The demand of the scientific self was a burden to investigate thoroughly, its epistemic relation to the object including the way of life of the philosophers and the scientists. The epistemic anxiety of indulging in the imagination (and preventing the role of reason) went toward an asceticism of

⁹ This attitude could be represented by the Goethe’s idea in the observation that sought Typus: “The mere idea of an archetype in general implies that no particular animal can be used as our point of comparison; the particular can never serve as a pattern [Muster] for the whole.” *Ibid.*, 70. As we have seen in the first chapter about transcendental anatomy, the “truth-to-nature” developed with German idealism and had an impact on naturalists in other countries. The collaboration with artists for the atlas remains a practice of an epistemic way, however the exact observation began to turn its look once again toward the singularity of objects. As more new specimens were gained from wider areas (which raised questions in classifying them), and the important period of the 1830s transpired when the notion of evolution had grown, the attention in observation became more focused on the differences between individualities, even though it was founded on the skills for an archetype.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 223.

¹² *Ibid.*, 225.

subjectivity in the form of self-denial in observation.

With the influence on Kantian philosophy on objectivity, the more the presence of subjectivity became admitted, the more observation became required to be neutral to realize a more exact description of objects. James advanced his research in experimental psychology under the new demand of objectivity enforced in the nineteenth century. The culture of sciences is embedded in the historical context of the society to which each scientist belongs; the norm of both hard work in Victorian Society and its masculine aspiration to unveil nature resulted in “the mechanical objectivity” in the scientific purist. Daston and Galison point out also that it forged “other-worldliness” due to the practice of the scientists. This image is represented in fictive or factual stories due to their activity around the world, on objects beyond the time scale of ordinary life, and their trained approach to them.¹³ The scientific self surely resulted from the social and historical context, however it also regulated their particular collective experience by the will of the scientists who tried to satisfy the normative demand in science at the time. Distancing the object from the self, scientists could pursue mechanical science in that era. To maintain objectivity the scientists employed more systematic observation by formalizing records on each case, and with the aide of the new technology of photography they could reproduce the images.

There was a transition from the search of an archetype and improving the images with the talented scientists and their artists, to the effacement of the subjectivity of the researcher from the atlas by putting the trust more and more in the mechanical way.¹⁴ Mechanical objectivity needed not only “the trained eye” with new technical tools such as a microscope or camera lucida, but at the same time “cultivating one’s will to bind and discipline the self by inhibiting desire, blocking temptation, and defending a determined effort to see without the distortions induced by authority, aesthetic pleasure, or self-love.”¹⁵ The restriction

¹³ *Ibid.*, 203.

¹⁴ See Chapter III “Mechanical Objectivity” in Daston and Galison, especially the section “Automatic Images and Blind Sight” for the introduction of photography in place of engraving for the atlas. *Ibid.*, 138-182.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 184-185.

of caprice and imagination in favor of reason in the Enlightenment era now sought the adaptation of the self to the mechanical method by submitting the individual self to the collective norm.

If imaginative activity was considered a malaise to be controlled, observation as routine work of scientists could become tedious. Despite the intellectual imagination in scientific work, the system of science had a tendency to repress spontaneity as an arbitrary force. James' conflict with his father when he had tried to become a painter, as we saw in Chapter 1, can be read in the transition of epistemic virtue from "truth-to-nature" to "mechanical objectivity"; although he tried to convince his father of the genius of scientists of the age (such as Cuvier), he noticed together with his father the decline of artists' roles in science through the emergence of mechanical objectivity. As we have seen in Chapter 1, he was weary to collect objects mechanically under Agassiz's order. Seeking the virtue of vocation in art and science, James could not let himself accept the epistemic virtue imposed by Agassiz in the collective work, and doubted it in his practice. On the other hand, as he did not mind the laboratory work with trained anatomist Wyman, despite its certain tediousness, James continued to try to brush up on his skills of scientific observation. The feeling of tedium in scientific work is not necessarily due to the observation and collection of facts – it was also caused by an institutional impasse linked with a paradigm of natural history along with mechanical science. Living through this shift in the epistemic virtue, he entered into psychological research through which he revised over and over again the question of objectivity in experimental psychology, whose methodology then turned him to philosophical questions.

3.2 James's Criticism on Spencer's Concept of Mind

William James started his career a few years after his MD in 1869. Working as an instructor of 'Comparative Anatomy and Physiology' starting in 1873 at Harvard

(succeeding Wyman's course), he undertook experimental studies between 1874 and 1892 in his laboratory. Before his own psychology laboratory, he had worked at the physiology laboratory of Henry Pickering Bowditch (1840-1911), James's senior at the medical school, who had trained in France and Germany. With another neurologist, James Jackson Putnam (1846-1918), they had made a reproduction of the experiments of Theodor Hermann Meynert (1833-1892) concerning the localization of brain functions in the early 1870s. It was in the collaboration of the three young doctors, who had first studied experimental physiology with French scientists, and vivisection at medical school. James learned about the interaction between psychology, physiology, and neurology in the experiments. They encountered inconsistencies in the results during the very progress of the experiments, and it led them to revise Cartesian dualism on the mind-body question, including the experimental method itself. It is not to be reduced to their anxiety as novice scientists, because it touched on the central problem in physiological psychology.

Eugene Taylor, historian of science, evaluates this collaboration as one that gave James the occasion to investigate "brain neurophysiology and the problem of consciousness."¹⁶ He considers for of James' later-published studies in the 1880s in the context of this experience: the undetermined ambiguous relation of both visual and auditory senses when balancing, the possible intervention of the experimenter's desire on the hypnotised subjects, the phantom limb phenomena, then the auto-writing implying Janet's dissociation.¹⁷ Using different kinds of methods, James intensified his interest in the methodology of psychological research that needed to take a distance from physiology: the subjectivity of experimenters through their influence on the research results in psychological research, and the importance of individual case study to see the detailed psychological phenomena through the brief questionnaires in large numbers.

¹⁶ Eugene Taylor. *William James on Consciousness Beyond the Margin* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 20.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18-20. About James's four studies, "The Sense of Dizziness in Deaf-Mutes" (1882) *EPS*, 127-141. "Reaction-Time in the Hypnotic Trance" (1887) *EPS*, 200-203. "The Consciousness of Lost Limbs" (1887) *EPS*, 204-215. "Notes on Automatic Writing (1889) *EPR*, 37-55.

In the process of interpreting empirical data from experiments, he inevitably returned to the question of the relation between physiology, psychology and philosophy. According to Perry, “The Flame of James’s philosophical interest burned brightly and continuously but the fuel was supplied irregularly. His studies, in the sense of systematic application under expert direction, were in the biological sciences.”¹⁸ Although James himself repeatedly stated that primary interest in philosophy since the beginning of his career in biology, his interest then pursued two courses: laboratory work and philosophy.¹⁹ To return to the philosophical problem originating in psychology was the source of James’s investigation, permitting him to confront not only a new phase of mind-body dualism under the influence of emerging experimental psychology but also its methodological problems.

His early readings of philosophy in the later 1860s to early 1870s had two sources; on the one hand, there were English philosophers close to natural science such as John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer. As we will see in the latter, an American mathematician, an early proponent of Darwin, and a senior friend of James, Chauncey Wright had an important influence in his understanding about English positivism. On the other hand, James learned Kantian philosophy through his discussion with his friends Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr and Bowditch during his stay in Germany, by exchanging letters, and a few years later with Charles Sanders Peirce. This led James to discover Neo-Kantianism in France, especially the thoughts of Charles Renouvier, who guided him to overcome an existential question on determinism by his concept of “free will.”²⁰ Organizing a philosophical circle

¹⁸ *TCWJI*, 228.

¹⁹ He signed for a permanent post in biology in 1874. *TCWJI*, 359.

²⁰ As for James’s understanding on “free will,” his diary on April 30 in 1870 has been repeatedly referenced in the biographical studies on James as a crucial moment in his thought. He wrote ‘I think that yesterday was a crisis in my life. I finished the first part of Renouvier’s second *Essais* and see no reason why his definition of free will—‘the sustaining of a thought *because I choose to* when I might have other thoughts’—need be the definition of an illusion. At any rate, I will assume for the present—until next year—that it is no illusion. My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will.” *TCWJI*, 323. Cf. Charles Renouvier, *Essais de critique general. Deuxième essai. L’homme: la*

called the Metaphysical Club with young scholars in Cambridge, the discussion inside and around this circle, especially absorbing the early conceptions of future pragmatism by Peirce and Wright, allowed James to deepen his reflection to develop epistemology for modern psychology that directly concerned its methodology.

Just as James read philosophy as inseparable from the life of the philosopher, research in psychology was also tied to the psychologist's life. As Edward S. Reed, a historian of psychology, points out, James was one of those who took seriously the question of objectivity in psychology under the influence of mechanical science, which was once questioned negatively by Kant and Thomas Reid: According to Kant, psychology cannot establish itself as natural science, because introspective methods produces very little significance regarding to only the continuity of the subjective time, Introspection is impossible as a psychological method. On the other, the metaphysical trend in the rational psychology confuses intuition of the transcendental condition and the conditions of possible experience. According to Reid psychology loses its real significance if it ignores the undeniable spiritual power of the substantial soul.²¹ In fact, following the development of natural sciences, the mechanical view of nature began to reach psychology through physiology; besides the development of psycho-physiology in Germany it was not free from the more apparent view, such as Thomas Henry Huxley's causal relation between material and mind in his automaton theory.²² As August Comte denied introspection as a method to knowledge, the view of the mechanical mind had a

raison, la passion, la liberté, la certitude, la probabilité morale. Paris: Librairie philosophique de Ladrangé, 1859.

²¹ Edward S. Reed, *From Soul to Mind: The Emergence of Psychology, from Erasmus Darwin to William James* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 23-27. Kant proposed post-Cartesian psychology, by denying the knowledge of self in Cogito forged by introspection, and insisted that psychology should be pursued by observation and description in the way of natural history in order to know how the mind (that is to say the world and the nations) had developed in the historical environment. On the other hand Thomas Reid questioned the idea on the cognitive faculty as causal effect of bodily stimulation that fails to know about our mental powers.

²² He was interested more in the parallelism of G. H. Lewes, which is very close to that of Huxley except that he reserved the ambiguous role of nervous system spread in the body in contrast to the Cartesian dualism of sensationalist succeeded by associationist. Although it inspired James, as Reed points out, he did not support both arguments of Lewes and his opponents affirmed by their positivist approach, whose theory after all was a dualistic view on neurosis and psychosis by considering the brain as a reflex machine. *Ibid.*, 148-156.

resonance with positivism by the mid-nineteenth century. Facing positivism as a foundation of the scientific inquiry of truth, James tried to reexamine the philosophical problem of objectivity and its historical context. For this purpose, he focused on the interest of positivists as a clue to clarify the entanglement of philosophy and psychology. In fact, this inquiry was intrinsic to modern psychology as a science of the thinking subject at the same time as the object of natural science since the seventeenth century.²³

James's adversary was Herbert Spencer. Although Comte's philosophy had an important influence in the field of science, it was Spencer who had a deep impact in America by his synthetic philosophy on the system of sciences with the vision of progress. According to the historian Richard Hofstadter, especially for young students, "in the three decades after the Civil War it was impossible to be active in any field of intellectual work without mastering Spencer."²⁴ Not only intellectuals, but also "the common man" who were self-educated formed another platform to receive Spencer's thought as a reference to their progress of life towards success.²⁵ On the other hand the wide influence of Spencer in the American society caused also a large criticism against his philosophy. While it might be possible simply to take distance from Spencer, James however chose to overcome Spencer's philosophy, which he once was absorbed in. When Peirce attacked it, he felt "spiritually wounded, as by the defacement of a sacred image or picture, though I could not verbally defend it against his criticisms."²⁶

In 1876, when James started to teach his graduate course Natural Science 2: "Physiological Psychology," he used Spencer's *The Principles of Psychology* as a textbook first published in 1855—before Darwin's *Origin*—and whose second edition appeared in 1870. Hence James's furious attack against Spencer's concerns about the understanding of Darwin's argument in the development of evolutionary theory. This course called "Spencer elective" attracted students. Aside from their

²³ George Canguilhem, "Qu'est-ce que la psychologie", *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*. Vol.63, no.1 (January, 1958), 15.

²⁴ Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (1944; rpt., Boston: Bacon Press, 1983), 33.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁶ *TCWJI*, 476.

interests following the reception of Spencer though the 1860s, he prepared this course carefully. James himself had already taken a distance from Spencer, with whom he was once fascinated. He wrote to his friend Thomas Wren Ward, “I am completely disgusted with the eminent philosopher, who seems to me more and more to be as absolutely worthless in all *fundamental* matters of thought, as he is admirable, clever and ingenious in secondary matters. His mind is a perfect puzzle to me, but the total impression is of an intensely two and sixpenny, paper-collar affair...”²⁷ James noticed the incoherency to cover up the synthetic theory. However, he continued to use Spencer as a text for his class Philosophy 3: “The Philosophy of Evolution” until 1897 as a guide to read critically the most influential evolutionary thought of the age.²⁸ His dismay on Spencer would be a part of the experience of his time. However, as Perry noticed, students as well as James had to revise the idea of evolution as far as they approached philosophy in relation to biology.²⁹

James’ comment above witnessed his uneasiness about Spencer in the essay “Remarks on Spencer’s Definition of Mind as Correspondence” (1878). James questioned Spencer’s deterministic premises about the mind characterized by its passivity towards the environment by ‘correspondence’ based on the inner-exterior relation. This was one of his four essays published in the late 1870s, which contained germs for his lifelong reflections before his contract for the *Principles* with a publisher. Among them, in his criticism of Spencer was a debut of the itinerary of James’s psychology, which went along with the impact of Darwin’s evolutionism.

It was in this essay that by examining the naturalization of mind as the object of psychology, he clearly brought out the concept of mind with ‘interest’. James found a knot of biology and philosophy, where the emotional reactions of the inquirer were also entangled. Because of his specialty in biology, the result of the Spencer vogue in the mid-nineteenth century was different from the other early

²⁷ Letter of WJ to Thomas Wren Ward, (December 30, 1876), *Corr. IV*, 552.

²⁸ *TCWJI*, 482.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 476.

pragmatists, Peirce and Wright. Not only did the concept of *interest* draw attention to psychologists' interest in their research, but it was also a key concept for James to begin his psychology where he was inevitably involved as an object of investigation. In addition, as we will see later, as a matter of fact, his view on "interest" of mind became an axis in the theory of will.

James saw Spencer's teleological explication in "the formula '*adjustment of inner to outer relations*'" for mental evolution, which was a transplanted idea from biology in order to explain "the entire process of mental evolution" and "Life".³⁰ In Part III on the "General Synthesis" of Spencer's *Principles of Psychology*, he said, "If the doctrine of Evolution is true, the inevitable implication is that Mind can be understood only by observing how Mind is evolved."³¹ With the keywords in capital letters, he tried to define the Mind comprehensively in the successive course of development from the physical to the psychical by unifying it by the name of Life. What troubled James about Spencer's concept of correspondence was its deterministic parallelism due to the mind's cognitive faculty as a mirror of nature. On the basis of the biological study on the morphological change in the embryogenesis, following this primary step, Spencer conceived the mind in the line of differentiation as a progress from the homogeneous to heterogeneous. The Life was explained in this progressive course. Spencer's idea of progress was led by biology "beginning with the low life of plants and of rudimentary animals, the progress to life of higher and higher kinds essentially consists in a continual improvement of the adaptation between organic processes and process which environ the organism."³²

He had already employed the achievement of German idealistic biology on the differentiation in the development of the organism as "the uniformity of procedure" in his essay "Progress Its Law and Cause"(1857).³³ According to his *Principles of*

³⁰ EPH, 7-8.

³¹ Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of psychology*, 2nd ed. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1870), 1: 291.

³² *Ibid.*, 1: 294.

³³ Herbert Spencer, "Spencer Progress: Its Law and Cause" (1857), in *Essays on education and kindred subjects* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1911), 175. About the uniformity process, "We believe we have shown beyond question, that that which the German

Biology (1867), “the Life is adequately conceived only when we think of it as ‘the definite combination of heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive, in correspondence with external co-existences and sequences’” in the development from homogeneity to heterogeneity of structure.³⁴ Therefore, by the law of correspondences, the Mind is considered to be developed by following up these external organic relations in the process of differentiation as “the development of a seed into a tree, or an ovum into an animal, constitute an advance from homogeneity of structure to heterogeneity of structure.”³⁵

The definition of *mind* is first of all the epistemological matter. James tried to draw out the dualism of the mind in the positivists’ view through Spencer’s argument. Spencer sought the general law about the Mind, the idea of “the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relation,” which was a presupposition that allowed him to follow the mind’s activities in a less erroneous way. According to Spencer, it allows one to observe the more vital phenomena even though it introduces the “non vital-phenomena” to the law.³⁶ Contrary to the passivity of the mind Spencer subscribed to, and despite his pursuit of objectivity, this was an approach which begged certain questions to affirm his point of view. There was a change of his tone saying that the mind *should* correspond to the exterior. James thought, however, this definition of mind corresponds to Spencer’s methodological attitude to erase his subjectivity: to put it more negatively, it covered up Spencer’s indifference about his position as observer in the guise of

physiologists have found to be the law of organic development, is the complex, through a process of successive differentiations, is seen alike in the earliest changes of the Universe to which we can reason our way back; and in the earliest changes which we can inductively establish; it is seen in the geologic and climatic evolution of the Earth, and of every single organism on its surface; it is seen in the evolution of Humanity, whether contemplated in the civilized individual, or in the aggregation of races; it is seen in the evolution of Society in respect alike of its political, its religious, and its economical organisation; and it is seen in the evolution of all those endless concrete and abstract products of human activity which constitute the environment of our daily life. From the remotest past which Science can fathom, up to the novelties of yesterday, that in which Progress essentially consists, is the transformation of homogeneous into the heterogeneous.” *Ibid.*, 174-175.

³⁴ Spencer 1870., 293 The background of this idea was due to the idea of the conservation of energy. Hofstadter resumed what spencer called “the persistency of force” as follows: “Evolution is the progressive integration of matter, accompanied by dissipation of motion; dissolution is the disorganization of matter accompanied by the absorption of motion.” Hofstadter, 36.

³⁵ Spencer, 1870, 294.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 293.

neutrality of the position for scientific facts. James pointed out the contradiction that split the mind in two opposite characters in defining it: “‘scientific thought,’ mere massive mirroring of outward nature, purely registrative cognition; at another time, thought in the exclusive service of survival, would seem to be his ideal.”³⁷ James criticised Spencer’s contradictory view on the mind. In order to explain the evolved mind, Spencer considered mind’s struggling for survival as a motor of evolution. However, if the mind should attain to the evolved state, the active function of mind is simply determined to progress to such state. It means the mind obliged to be totally passive in the course of its evolution. As a result Spencer excluded the active aspect of the mind. The mind as thinking subject is considered as what is isolated from the entity of the mind. James saw here the impasse of Spencer’s dualistic view on the mind conceived with the activity and the passivity by his “objectivism.” For it could not approach to the entire mind as a living thing.

Spencer’s evolutionism was at first established as the theory of progress in the 1850s, then went along with the development of evolutionary theory in biology mostly under the influence of Lamarckism. According to James’s essay, Spencer’s fallacy was introduced when he made an analogy between Life in capital letter as an entire process of the evolution in biology and “the entire process of mental evolution.”³⁸ This idea of Spencer was based on the division of between biology and the mental state, because Spencer bound the branches of science up as a system by the general law of evolution from homogeneity to heterogeneity. As a result, consciousness was considered what had emerged and grown in a certain moment in the higher creature. For James, there were not two different parallel processes of the Mind, nor did evolution of consciousness follow this line of progress. James sees the development of the mind included radically in that of life as follows: “The ascertainment of outward fact constitutes only one species of mental activity. The genus contains, in addition to purely cognitive judgments, or judgments of the actual— judgments that things do, as a matter of fact, exist so or so— an immense number of emotional judgments: judgment of ideal, judgment that things *should*

³⁷ EPH, 16.

³⁸ The paragraph corresponding to this perspective of Spencer was expressed especially in Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of psychology*, §130.

exist thus and not so.”³⁹ This intermingled process is as an agency responding to the external situations; in addition, this agency was born with a being that possesses the innate. As far as the mind is defined only to correspond to the outward, progress will mean a better adaptation as a whole by spoiling a variety of judgments made by individuals, which might occur in the evolution of consciousness.

Spencer’s analogy between biology and mind evolution was a part of his entire system ruled by the law of progress. Psychology was considered the special part of Biology as Objective psychology in the chapter “*The Scope of Psychology*” in his *Principles*. The mind on which James worked was first considered for Objective psychology in the hierarchical series from Astronomy, Geology to Biology, where each of them developed through their own differentiation processes. Ikutaro Shimizu summarises Spencer’s synthetic vision on the order of progress as follows: “the idea of progress became that of evolution through the development of biology. ... The law of evolution was applied on the one end to the great cosmic universe, on the other end to the subtle details in arts.”⁴⁰ Even after the influence of Darwin, Spencer’s theory of evolution had combined with the idea of progress in its wider context which exceeded biology. In this confusion, Spencer regarded the subjective part of Psychology as “a totally unique science, independent of, and antithetically opposed to, all other sciences whatever.”⁴¹ By this procedure, the mind activity was separated from its biological basis. For, “the thoughts and feelings which constitute a consciousness, and are absolutely inaccessible to any but the possessor of that consciousness, form an existence that has no place among the existence with which the rest of the sciences deal.”⁴² He just reduced psychology to what once was considered impossible as science. Although Spencer said, “Mind still continues to us a something without any kinship to other things,” the mind he conceived for Objective psychology became a concept like an empty shell, where he found convenient meaning in each situation.⁴³ Spencer’s mind seemed incongruous

³⁹ EPH, 8.

⁴⁰ Ikutaro Shimizu, *The Classic Book 46, Spencer, Compte* (Tokyo: Chuokoronsha, 1980), 56.

⁴¹ Spencer, 1870, 1:294.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1:294.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1:40.

because it sometimes excluded mind outside, while in other places it included mind inside only as a mechanical entity. The place of psychology in the system is uncertain. In fact, Spencer himself admits that the subject of science depends on its artificial classification and that its organism needs to be re-examined. If James had tried to link psychology to other natural sciences as one of them, the question is about the way it was related and even the relation itself on which he would lately advance a philosophical reflection. At least, it was evident for James that each branch is not unified by analogy under the universal law.

In order to explain the mind in terms of evolution James tried to hold subjectivity in mind; it was at least to see ‘mind state’ as the object of psychology in which biology is also concerned. If the teleological character of mind in Spencer’s theory was reflected in his trust on the view about the order of progress, James saw differently the faculty of the mind’s correspondence to the environment. According to James, “we are all fated to be, *a priori*, teleologists whether we will or no. Interests which we bring with us, and simply posit or take our stand upon, are the very flour out of which our mental dough is kneaded.”⁴⁴ James reinterprets the teleological character of Spencer’s mind as “*telos*” led by the interest of the mind defined by him as an agent. The teleology of all the processes of Mind is not same as the *telos* of each mind. The mind’s correspondence to the environment is not simply passive but interactive action. According to James, the mind “is *intelligent intelligence*. It seems both to supply the means and the standard by which they are measured. It not only *serves* a final purpose, but *brings* a final purpose— posits, declares it.”⁴⁵

Affirming his view, James contrasted Spencer’s Mind, which made it possible for the outer observer to induce the mental state. It means that Spencer accepted this limit rather than threatened the law “co-relation and sequences” for other sciences, in other words, it is not the objective observation of mental facts as it were – it was his interest in the pursuit of scientific inquiry. Due to Spencer’s vision of an overarching system beyond natural sciences, his argument on progress replacing the

⁴⁴ EPH, 18.

⁴⁵ EPH, 20.

concept of evolution permitted James to explain that a scientific theory could be affirmed by being mixed up with a scientist's belief. He tried to bring out explicitly that the possible approach to the mind would be circular. James himself proposed a hypothesis on the mind: he believed that the mind contains its individual interest by which itself might be guided. In this framework, he affirmed in his turn his conviction about the impossibility of an *a priori* separation of mind into objective and subjective parts:

The knower is an actor, and co-efficient of the truth on one side, whilst on the other he registers the truth that he helps to create. Mental interests, hypotheses, postulates, so far as they are bases for human action—action that to a great extent transforms the world— help to *make* the truth which they declare. In other words, there belongs to the mind, from its birth upward, a spontaneity, a vote. It is in the game, and not a mere looker-on; and its judgments of the *should-be*, its ideals, cannot be peeled off from the body of the *cogitandum* as if they were excrescences, or meant, at most, for survival.⁴⁶

Teleology needs to be understood simply as function; it means the way the mind pursues its particular interest. The interest of the mind means the particular interest of an individual. In his essay “Are We Automata?” (1879), summarizing his argument of the essay on Spencer, James carefully separated the interest of the individual from the general tendency of the mind: “The fact that each consciousness simply *stakes* its ends and challenges the world thereby, is most conspicuous in the case of what is called Self-love. There the end staked by each mind is peculiar to itself, whilst in respect of other ends many minds unite in a common position. But in their psychological essence these impersonal ends in no wise differ from self-interest.”⁴⁷ Besides a variation of the objects toward which the mind was directed, James held the perspective to mind's mechanism at the level of impersonal

⁴⁶ *EPH*, 21.

⁴⁷ *EPS*, 44.

as personal one. James regarded Spencerian teleological evolution of progress as the expression of spencer's individual interest or the interest of Spencer's followers.

However by the very same reason, James saw that "the consciousness of Mr. Darwin lays it down as axiomatic that self-preservation or survival is the essential or universal good for all living things." The spontaneous mind as an agent as James described above has its character attributed to it by Darwin's belief for the survival of existence as a primal good for creatures: "But now suppose that not only our Darwinian consciousness, but with even greater energy the consciousness of the creature itself, postulates survival as its *summum bonum*, and by its cognitive faculty recognizes as well as Mr. Darwin which of its actions and functions subserves this good; would not the addition of causal efficacy to this consciousness enable it to furnish forth the means as well as fix the end—make it teleologically a fighter as well as a standard-bearer?"⁴⁸ James saw also the role of Darwin's own interest that guided his discovery of natural selection.

Darwin's natural selection was a thoroughly mechanical process and also random spontaneous variation; the mind pursues this good by chance. The evolutionary mind that Darwin brought out would only ask to what extent it could adapt to its environment for survival; James understood that it does not contain any other criteria of good except the quantitative question. Therefore, he considered that the process to evaluate the mind's efficacy needed to contain its qualitative criteria as a cause – the interest of its knower; if James affirmed the spontaneity of the mind by Darwin against Spencer's passive mind, the need to examine "the peculiarities of individual consciousness" as another argument followed through his criticism, which came to characterise his psychology of the self.

In fact, this insight of James seems to correspond to a biographical episode of Darwin. After his experience of the Voyage of Beagle, in September 1838, almost one and a half years after his doubt in the divine agency in creation, he was reading Thomas Robert Malthus' *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1789). Before the fact that there was survival as war in nature, the idea of 'natural selection' came to him as a counter function of the propagative power. Reading Malthus's book,

⁴⁸ EPS, 45.

Darwin recalled, “being well prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence... it at once struck me that under these circumstances favorable variations would tend to be preserved, and unfavourable ones to be destroyed. Here, then, I had at last got a theory by which to work.”⁴⁹ His biographer Janet Browne put importance on this moment in the development of Darwin’s thoughts—although, as she points out, his first starting point is not exactly known.⁵⁰ Darwin sought a mechanical process, and following his interest to support his idea as a scientific theory, he worked hard to accumulate facts and carefully verified them for almost two decades before their publication—and even at that time he was not satisfied with the facts. His almost lifelong devotion to the systematic observations that would correspond to objectivity constituted his epistemic virtue; anxiety ruined his health along with the inquiry.

In the concept of the mind envisaged by accepting Darwin’s theory, setting it as the subject of psychology, James tried to keep here Darwin’s mechanical process of natural selection. Although James’s view was also provisional, he tried to open the discussion to examine its methodology of psychology; the impersonal aspects permitted his research to advance with the development of physiological psychology, and at the same time scientific research on the mind always includes an individual aspect of each person. As a matter of fact, these two aspects were intrinsic to the tradition of modern psychology: as Kant said psychology was a natural science of the self only through anthropological observation, and on the other hand, Maine de Biran and other spiritualists continued the inquiry on the rational psychology of the soul—the psychology of the substantial self founded on intuition.⁵¹ Between these traditions, James had to reinterpret them in his way for his own psychology.

⁴⁹ Charles Darwin, *Autobiographies*, 1887, ed. Michael Neve and Sharon Messenger (London: Penguin Classic, 2002)

⁵⁰ Janet Browne, *Darwin’s Origin of Species: A Biography* (London: Atlantic Book), 44-45.

⁵¹ Geroges Canguilhem, “Qu’est-ce que la psychologie ?”, *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 63, no.1 (January 1958):18.

3.3 Subjective Method and Stream of Consciousness

James advanced his question more clearly on the pursuit of objectivity in psychology. He addressed the positivists' belief that they do not affect the facts by rejecting the observer's subjectivity, as if the knower's consciousness isolated him from his object. It concerns the fact that if consciousness is given immediately, then consciousness itself can observe this state as if it existed separate from consciousness. It is a series of his methodological questions to see the mind, which resulted in his concept of "stream of thoughts" – or as later called, "stream of consciousness."—and contained the philosophical question with which psychology had developed.

There are two arguments in James' view: first, the relation between things is unknowable unless we react to it, and second, so far as it concerns knowing our living life, to examine the mind must contain the temporality of our living individual other than a long period of the development of mind as that of Life in Spencer's psychology. In other words, to what extent can the mind be investigated as impersonal and how should it be considered as personal? James tried to consider if the life of the psychologist could have an influence on the results of his research. This point of view required him to revise the method of introspection that took a principal role in psychological research. Despite the argument of the impossibility of introspection, it has remained until today in the science of Mind, therefore, we will see how James tried to use introspection with its difficulties as a method.

In the same year as his essay on Spencer, in the French essay "Some Consideration on the Subjective Method" (1878), James described consciousness by its relation to the outward, in a complex enough way to make a clear difference from Spencer's idea of correspondences. According to James, materialists suppose that there were the mass of the facts independent from our consciousness (=M); it remains only an undivided immense block compounded from different phenomena before us, unless it was figured out without our reaction (=r). On the other hand, when we know things, it is always knowable as M+r. Therefore, if M is already before us even if it is considered independent from one's consciousness, it is in fact

M that was in our intimate world-- that is to say, it is already taken in some relation to what our interest is; materialists regard M as a pure fact, and positivists consider M as phenomenon but what existed as such.⁵² However, James saw the positivist attitude as having a tendency to ignore the relation of M+r, considering it as their “M” by the very reason of their reserve of subjective judgment, which already gave a character of “M” including their point of view.

To give an explanation to a perception of a thing, one needs to describe his/her relationship to the object in order to know how the one acquire that perception. This explanation includes the explication on how we perceive the object through a sensation. When James posed the above question on the objective facts, two theoretical traditions about the sensation needed to be reexamined: on the one hand, British associationist psychology succeeding George Berkeley’s empiricism based on the visual image as a *sign* which combined with its signification made by habitual observation.⁵³ On the other hand nativism in German psychophysicists who seek the order of visual impression in the structure of retina. To establish the ordered sensations, the British empiricists presupposes an atomic sensation that requires the process of association by intellectual inference in order that it become a spatial experience; on the contrary, the nativists understood a spatial experience due to its physiological foundation as what was innate. However, both of these two were intrinsic to the development of the new experimental psychology. For example, although Wundt is a representative of the latter school, as Perry pointed out, reviewing the minute observation in his experiments in 1875, James commented that “Wundt’s notion of ‘synthesis’ the equivalent of the ‘mental chemistry’ of the British school, and felt that neither had solved the problem as to how new qualities are generated out of old.”⁵⁴ By the late 1870s, due the development of physiopsychology, James could have a reference of new theories about each

⁵² EPH, 27-28.

⁵³ George Berkeley, *An Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision*, 4th ed. 1709, in *The Works of G. Berkeley: Bishop of Cloyne*, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (London: Nelson, 1964), §147.

⁵⁴ TCWJ II, 54. This is originally quoted from James review on Wundt’s *Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie* published 1874, ERC, 297.

position of these two lines in the work of Hermann von Helmholtz (1821-1894) and Ewald Hering (1834-1918).⁵⁵ Stéphane Madelrieux points out that James accepted the physiological basis that Hering showed, and that with this condition James criticized the associationists' account on the relations by which perception became intellectually constructed from multiple sensations.⁵⁶ To say it differently, objectivity comes from a sensation, which James considered innate at the same time as acquired: on the one hand, a visual perception is physiological as Hering explained, however it is not explained fully by the nerves; on the other hand, an atomic perception remained to endow the perception to interpretation by intellectual means.

James sums up Helmholtz's theory of visual sensations as exterior *signs* as follows: "The visual sensations from which we avert attention are those which are valueless as tokens of the presence of objective thing."⁵⁷ James seems to accept the pure objectivity of the sensation. The sensation is a sign because one's attention was already there. In James' sense, attention does not always mean a volitional one — it means "pure" and James' words, "valueless," attention. The spontaneity of the mind, even accidentally directing one's experience, cannot be omitted from the beginning, because "the spontaneity of the mind does not consist in conjuring up any new non-sensational quality of objectivity."⁵⁸ It could be that objectivity consisted "solely in deciding what the particular sensation shall be whose native objectivity shall be held more valid than that of all."⁵⁹ Whatever a sensation represented as it is, its objectivity owed first to the selective function of the mind, then to "personal interest" — called "a sharpener of discrimination alongside of practice."⁶⁰ As far as spontaneity is taken into consideration, James accepted not only analytical perception due to its circumstance in the primitive physiological sensation, but also synthetic perception to discriminate the "sum of sensations" by our judgment when

⁵⁵ R. Steven Turner, *In The Eye's Mind: Vision And The Helmholtz-Hering Controversy*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁵⁶ Stephen Madelrieux, *William James. L'attitude empiriste* (Paris, PUF, 2008), 24.

⁵⁷ *EPS*, 47.

⁵⁸ *EPS*, 49.

⁵⁹ *EPS*, 49.

⁶⁰ *PP*, 487.

complex and simultaneous sensations occur. In the synthetic perception, James in fact follows Helmholtz's observations.⁶¹

In addition to the mechanical physiological process of visual perception, there are individual preferences and situations which will differentiate the representation of sensations such as broadness, color, and form. Instead of considering that perception is made up only intellectually from a sensation so as to bring out the order of perception, James tried to see how each sensation has its genuine quality, it means, a particularity as to what is felt as such. A sensation of an object is perceived differently in different situations and by the previous experience of the individual who catches it in sight. Taking into consideration this point of view, James criticized the concept of the relation used by intellectualists to establish chains of association, because it is incapable of giving a sufficient explanation for the selective function of the mind. A sensation is not atomic but is curved out as a particular block as such from the chaotic contact with the environment. Due to his understanding of the mind in the late 1870s, James insisted on the character of objectivity in the following way:

Out of all present sensations, we notice mainly such as are significant of absent ones; and out of all the absent associates which these suggest, we again pick out a very few to be the bearers *par excellence* of objective reality. We could have no more exquisite example of the mind's selective industry.⁶²

If the associationists depicted visual perception synthetically as what was established from atomic sensations and a non-sensitive intellectual operation of inference, James gave a materiality to the facts, to each perceived "M." These facts are not brought by only physiological basis but by both sensation and empirical inference, they are co-existing indissolubly as a piece. Therefore "M" is that which

⁶¹ *PP*, 488-494. Especially James's quotation from *On the Basis for the Theory of Music*, 2nd ed. trans. Alexander J Ellis (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1885), about *muscae volantes* of eye which James seemed to seek as innate selectivity.

⁶² *EPS*, 49.

comes into the mind as such by finding out its proper situation. Madelrieux called this position of James' "primitivist"; he also used the same term for the position of German psychologist Carl Stumpf (1848-1936) from whom James had this idea, and who opposed innatism such as Hering's position considered as nativist sensationalism.⁶³ This remark went along with the notice on not only the conjunctive relation which create experience starting from atomic sensations, but also the disjunctivity of the relation by which the facts are perceived as such. Therefore, if the object were isolated independently, this states of isolation does not mean that the relation does not exist but that it is known as absent.⁶⁴ The relation concept means both conjunction and disjunction, which is in contrast to the Spencerian concept of relation that the mind could mirror by adjusting to the order of nature. All the discrimination and the comparison which result the perceptions is formed through an individual's life. The motor of the perception comes to be gradually perfected in the individual, James explains: "*The effect of practice in increasing discrimination must then, in part, be due to the reinforcing effect, upon an original slight difference between the terms, of additional differences between the diverse associates which they severally affect.*"⁶⁵

Therefore, the objectivity of mental facts in psychology should focus on the level of M+r as the proper data to examine. If psychology needs to know about the mind, where psychological facts are intertwined with its subject, psychology needs its proper method to deal with its data. For this reason, he needed first to question the positivists' requirement for objectivity as "universal rule,"⁶⁶ which requires the subjectivity of inquirer to be repressed. Being doubtful to objectivist view, James asserted his subjective method by answering to the question that "*whether one be justified in rejecting a theory which many objective facts apparently confirm, solely*

⁶³ Madelrieux, 30-31.

⁶⁴ Stumpf said, "Of coexistent sensations there are always a large number of undiscriminated in consciousness (or if one prefers to call what is undiscriminated unconscious, in the soul). They are, however, not fused into a simple quality." James quoted in the footnote of chapter XIII (Discrimination and Comparison) in *PP*, 494.

⁶⁵ *PP*, 483.

⁶⁶ *EPH*, 24.

because it does not in any way respond to our inward preferences.”⁶⁷ James wants to stress the spontaneity of mind contrary to Spencer who considered it as an ignorable fact, James does not defy objectivity in natural sciences, but rather it allows to examine the way of confirming “objective facts” as such because researches faces a methodological impasse. Psychology could share a criterion of objectivity with other natural sciences such as physiology, to which it owed a lot. However, it has different aspects from the other branches of science. With the extension of the physiological approach along with the tradition of British associationist philosophy, as well as new facts from the laboratory. James thought psychological research faced a critical moment as to its biological basis due to the paradigm shift following Darwin’s evolution theory. For James, the subjective method would allow one to declare the absurdity of psychological research submitted to the positivist norm. It was a methodological difficulty of its scientific approach different from other natural sciences. To justify the subjective method, he questioned the burden of arbitrary personal preferences and the concept of “subjectivity” in his continual quest of methodology. From the beginning he undertook this task by trying to make out the inevitable influence of Darwin’s achievement in biology.

His insistence on subjectivity is understood in relation to his biographical facts and his emotional experiences, especially his reception of Renouvier’s idea of free will. Therefore his assertion of the subjective method would be misleading as an unscientific approach despite his voluminous and attentive verification about the achievements of contemporary physiology as well as experimental psychology. It is certain that James’ argument involved an epistemological query as its question on the concept of the relation, which seemed to go beyond the practice of natural sciences. As far as the “known” is at the same time the “knowing” of the function of living life which interacts with its environment, as M+r, they contain contingency due to the spontaneity of the mind. The point not to miss is that James’s theory is also dependent on scientific theory that was discovered and established—as Darwin

⁶⁷ *EPH*, 23. This translation is based on an anonymous English translation in the James Collection at Harvard in *EPH*, 331.

did for his natural selection theory. By the very reason that it emanated from one's intelligence, scientific facts could not be completely detached from the life of the individual person who investigated them, one's life as a whole, includes his/her spheres of esthetics and ethics judgments. Therefore, James seemed not to hesitate to say that the inquiry of the mind could hardly be accomplished independently from the questions in esthetics and ethics. Then, he tried to connect psychology to them at certain points where psychology cannot advance with its scientific method in the scheme of natural sciences.

This general vision of knowledge, need to be discussed in chapter 4. For now, one must remember that James considered the mind at the level of an individual person as a historical existence including its minute motor level of perception to the more complex aspects of consciousness. His explanation about the selectivity of mind is paraphrased as follows: "the world we feel and live in, will be that which our ancestors and we, by slowly cumulative strokes of choice, have extricated out of this, as the sculptor extracts his statue by simply rejecting the other portions of stone. Other minds, other worlds from the same chaos! Goethe's world is but one in a million alike embedded, alike real to those who may abstract them."⁶⁸

Subjective method means that the psychologist James himself needed to describe his feeling as mental states by radically reconsidering the concept of consciousness. In introspection, since Descartes, consciousness was considered given to the subject immediately. Georges Canguilhem pointed out, "It is that the lesson of Descartes was unrecognised, when, against him, an empirical psychology as natural history of self was constituted—from Locke to Ribot, through Condillac, French ideologues and British utilitarians. And when, following him, a rational psychology was constituted and founded on the intuition of a substantial Self, which one believed supposedly." The germ of the two lines in modern psychology mentioned above, in fact, could be found in Descartes' metaphysical meditations.⁶⁹ As James considered Spencer's preoccupation of the objectivity postulated in the

⁶⁸ *EPS*, 51-52.

⁶⁹ Canguilhem, 18.

separation between the knower and the known, these two aspects could be separated by ignoring their intrinsic relation.

Edwin G. Boring, a historian of psychology, pointed out that psychophysical parallelism, particularly in newly developed experimental psychology in 1870s, was also involved in the concept of consciousness which James questioned. The classical introspection had been still used to know the sensation's stimulus—such as Gustav Theodor Fechner's law of threshold. In short, Boring said, "there is no need to labor the point that parallelism was the accepted doctrine of the century and that psychophysics consisted in the observation of correlations, many of them quantitative."⁷⁰ Wundt's experimental psychology certainly modified introspection by requiring the observers to be trained enough to gain adequate introspection because of errors. In Wundt's laboratory the experimenters were required to trust such observers' introspections. Boring summed up that during a half century following Fechner this method of introspection came to be employed to not only quantitative aspects but also quality, and he admitted that it was even still used when he wrote his essay in 1953. He pointed out that they "always talked about observing and measuring sensation, but actually they were *observing, reporting upon, and measuring, not complete sensations, but sensory attributes* [emphasis added]."⁷¹ In fact, this introspection as "observation" has even been practiced, even after the observation on the interior state of mind has continued in the field of neurosciences and brain sciences with developed apparatus. Accepting on the one hand the physiological data due to psychophysics, James' understanding of introspection had questioned "description." As we have seen, it was due to his concept of a sensation perceived disjunctively from its surroundings, that is to say he admitted the possibility of observation of the mental state but subordinated that of description despite his last resort in language for experiences.

In the essay "On Some Omissions of Introspective Psychology" (1884), James described a feeling in his particular way: "The present conscious state, when I say

⁷⁰ Edwin G. Boring, "A history of Introspection," *Psychological Bulletin* 50, no.3 (May 1953): 180.

⁷¹ Boring, 181.

“I feel tired,” is not the direct feeling of tire. when I say " I feel angry," it is not the direct feeling of anger. It is the feeling of *saying-I-feel-tired*, of *saying-I-feel-angry*—entirely different matters, so different that the fatigue and anger apparently included in them are considerable modifications of the fatigue and anger directly felt the previous instant. The act of naming them has momentarily detracted from their force.”⁷² A feeling is not an already analyzed or classified sentiment. Mind state is always changing; therefore he tried to grasp the feeling consisting in a situation by compounding elements at once. This analysis of language for a description of feeling became a motif to develop his notion of stream of consciousness.⁷³ In fact these essays would be integrated into Chapter IX of *The Principles of Psychology* titled “the Stream of thoughts”—James used this term instead of “the stream of consciousness” for the title of the chapter, but he used them alternatively. In this essay, he already explained the two different phases of the stream of consciousness with his well-known metaphor of the bird:

When we take a rapid general view of the wonderful stream of our consciousness, what strikes us first is the different *pace* of its different portions. Our mental life, like a bird’s life, seems to be made of an alternation of flights and perchings. The rhythm of languages expresses this, where every thought is expressed in a sentence, and every sentence closed by a period. The resting-places are usually occupied by sensorial imaginations of some sort, whose peculiarity is that they can be held before the mind for an indefinite time, and contemplated without changing; the places of flight are filled with thoughts of relations, static or dynamic, that for the most part obtain between the matters contemplated in the periods of

⁷² *EPS*, 143.

⁷³ The concept of “stream of consciousness” is well known with the name of James, however Girel pointed out the expression of ‘stream’ as a metaphor of consciousness is already found in some readers, Royce for example, referred to a “stream” of *Vorstellungen* in Kant, then was used by contemporary philosophers and psychologists such as Lewes, Hodgson, and Peirce. Mathias Girel, “Le courant de conscience chez James et quelques autres (Lewes, Hodgson, Peirce)”. (Lecture at Séminaire des Archives Husserl "Le naturalisme à la limite", Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris, December 26, 2012).

comparative rest.⁷⁴

His metaphor of *flights* and *perchings* will help us understand how feeling, combined with the rules of language consists of an intertwined movement of thought. As far as it concerns understanding about the movement of thoughts, it seems that the description is impersonal enough to consider James as a Cartesian observer. However, dealing with perception due to not a pure sensation but feeling, James pointed out the two fallacies about the description of introspection.⁷⁵ It seems to radically question the possibility of introspection to tell the facts immediately given to the mind.

The fallacies are explained as follows, firstly: “As a snowflake caught in the warm hand is no longer a flake but a drop, so instead of catching the feeling of relation moving to its term, we find we have caught some substantive thing, usually the last word we were promoting.”⁷⁶ According to James, in order to represent this last stable state the orthodox empirical psychologist has identified it with a word, as “the name of images, *Vorstellungen*, or ideas”, however it took only a last movement of thoughts, as if calling a drop of water a snowflake. James’s example reminds us of his discussion about the present as an ideal, and what he called “specious present”: the feeling of time-duration as *now* is due to over-lapping separate perceptions as well as the brain process.⁷⁷ If the present is specious, how it is possible to introspect what is immediate to the mind? The hyphens in his expression reflect James’ notion of perception, as he explained in two causes; due to the mind’s differentiation of feeling due to dissociating an object from potential multiple relations, at the same time, to associating the object with others relations by resemblance.⁷⁸ In order to describe the perception of feeling as an incessant

⁷⁴ *EPS*, 143. This part reappears in the *Principles* in Chapter IX “The Stream of Thought” in *PP*, 236.

⁷⁵ This argument is reargued as two psychologists’ fallacies in chapter VII “The Methods and Snares of Psychology” in *PP*, 195-196.

⁷⁶ *EPS*, 144. This part also reappears in the *Principles* in Chapter IX in *PP*, 237.

⁷⁷ *PP*, 600. Cf. Claude Debru, “William James: la temporalité,” in *William James. Psychologie et Cognition*, ed. Claude Debru, Christiane Chauviré and Mathias Girel (Paris: Edition Pétra, 2008), 49-83.

⁷⁸ *PP*, 468.

movement of the mind, introspection as description seems to be inevitably retrospective, as if obliged to trick temporality. However, as he had painfully to hyphenate words at once, he explained abstractly the process of discrimination itself about a fact *n* as “the sequence is not simply first ‘m,’ then ‘difference,’ then ‘n’; but first ‘m,’ then ‘difference,’ then ‘n-different-from-m.’”⁷⁹

The second fallacy of introspection that James pointed out is “ignoring the fact that a peculiar modification of our subjective feeling corresponds to our awareness of each objective relation, and is the condition of its being known.”⁸⁰ It concerns also the part of the hyphen in James’ expression from the point of temporality. James drew attention to Spencer’s remark that “a relation proves to be itself a kind of feeling— the momentary feeling accompanying the transition from one conspicuous feeling to another conspicuous feeling.”⁸¹ Spencer’s concept of relation was based on the associationist tradition; this relation is abstractly limited to “likeliness und unlikeliness, co-existence in space and sequence in time,” which conceived the mind as a mirror in which the exterior relations of nature are reproduced. However it is not the same as one’s habitual order of feeling. Although Spencer also explained that this “feeling of relation” is qualitative despite its longevity or brevity, James insisted the relation is inconsiderable without its subject. Then he insisted that there is a variety of “feelings of relation”: “there is not a conjunction or a preposition, and hardly an adverbial phrase, syntactic form, or inflection of voice, in human speech, that does not express some moment actually feel to exist between the larger objects of thought,” that is to say, such as a “feeling of *and*, a feeling of *if*, a feeling of *but* and feeling of *by*.”⁸² In short, the scientific observation on a feeling is impersonal, however once we take on introspection as observation, what seems to be the object can not be found, and as a result introspection might only reflect what one wants to see there. James himself understood this problem well, however, and his remarks on the fallacies of introspection interestingly went along with his concept of the stream of thought

⁷⁹ *PP*, 471.

⁸⁰ *EPS*, 145.

⁸¹ *EPS*, 145.

⁸² *EPS*, 145.

consisting of the two different parts of the substantial and the transitive in thought, which Wittgenstein would criticize. According to Wittgenstein, James confused the first person and the third person as a general point of view in the introspection. For James's description on the stream of thoughts considered being able to make an observation about others' stream of thoughts through his introspection. However, James himself noticed one's personal reflection is closed in the one-self, therefore others' thinking is not describable only by analogy not by the observation. It is because his introspection through linguistic description made him misunderstand the fact all of us think with a basis of certain language as a possible general description of thinking.⁸³

The inquiry of experience will not be accomplished either only in the third person in the experimental psychology or only in the first person in introspection rooted in philosophy. Gerald E Myers pointed out, James considered some interior process was simultaneously observable as far as that feeling is noticed by being brought into one's attention.⁸⁴ James' efforts to describe the mental states faced the grammatical limit of our language.

In terms of psychology as a natural science, if James continued to seek the possibility of psychology as a natural science which was different from both psychophysics and philosophy, and how should its scientific character be considered? At least it seems that James sought a way of putting forth the Subjective method in psychology, because knowing facts includes the subjective part even in scientific investigation, as if it were purely personal enough to be impersonal and advanced by the interests and norms of the scientific community. Introspection would not result in a description of either transcendental Ego or universal law. James just affirmed, "If we speak objectively, it is the real relations that appear revealed; if we speak subjectively, it is the stream of consciousness that matches each of them by an inward coloring of its own. In either case the relations

⁸³ Christiane Chauviré "Les mirage de l'introspection. Wittgenstein critique de James," in *L'Art du Comprendre: W. James, C.S. Peirce, J. Dewey... Tradition et vocation du pragmatism*, Deuxième série, no.16, (Juin 2007): 156-161.

⁸⁴ Gerald E Myers, "Pragmatism and Introspective Psychology," in *The Cambridge Companion to William James*, ed. Ruth Anna Putnam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 13.

are numberless, and no existing language is capable of doing justice to all their shades.”⁸⁵

“The stream of thought” is a block of segments we feel to be continuous; an ensemble of it consists of a feeling, then the knowing is to focus attention to a certain block in a possible succession of these segments. As we have seen, James considered whether what is known is, either objective or subjective as a result of the way we pay attention to it. It is a matter of science and of personal belief. Then, explaining the successive relation, James said, “be the definition of the separateness of the parts what it may, the burden of proving its existence lies with its friends. For the stream of our feeling is sensibly continuous, like time’s stream. [...] It presents itself as a continuum.”⁸⁶

Comparing the stream of thought with that of time, James insisted that empty time is not sensible, so that the knower would not be transcendental Ego. The stream of thought became that of consciousness, as James used them alternatively without notification, and as there are only these streams. Therefore, it is impossible to say the transcendental Ego is the subject of thought and consciousness. In “Are We Automata?” James already mentioned this problem: “A succession of feeling is not (as James Mill reiterates) one and the same thing with a feeling of succession, but a wholly different thing. The latter feeling requires self-transcendence of each item, so that each not only is in relation, but knows its relation, to the other. This self-transcendence of data constitutes the conscious form. Where we suppose it to exist we have mind; where mind exists we have it.”⁸⁷ This evocative formulation about succession reappeared in *The Principles of Psychology* about the representation of time: “*A succession of feeling, in and of itself, is not a feeling of succession.*”⁸⁸ It does not mean the latter is impossible. This expression is in part due to his modification of Spencer’s remark of “a feeling of relation” as what is possible only with the subject. On the other hand, by the same reason it explained the physiological facts that the outer forces impress the brain to copy it by

⁸⁵ *EPS*, 145.

⁸⁶ *EPS*, 147.

⁸⁷ *EPS*, 43-44.

⁸⁸ *PP*, 591.

representation, then these represented mental images are to be successive in the mind. James did not fully deny the latter process to be described impersonally, although, according to James “the mind’s own changes *being* successive, and *knowing their own succession*, lies as broad a chasm as between the object and subject of any case of cognition in the world.”⁸⁹ These two different modes consist of feeling. Though either of them is describable but does not give a complete account of feeling.

In James’ psychology, he seems to come and go between these two positions by focusing on each part of the stream of consciousness. The stream of consciousness is a concept clarified along with the development of his descriptive psychology; at the same time it witnesses that his psychology as a whole is related to physiology, especially the nervous system and the brain. Admitting the latter facts, the Subjective method he developed from his criticism on Spencer in order to describe the mind states in flux seems to pose a question: if we came to know thoroughly about the succession of feeling in cognitive processes, what influence was there on the feeling of succession—in other words, on a feeling of self or even on a matter of the soul that psychology since its very beginnings had tried to explain. James accepted both states as the subject of psychology and never forced to himself to choose one of them. His struggle with this problem (between subjectivity and objectivity) is rather investigated through the concept of “attention” while seeking also its biological aspects. When James described what attention is, he had to accept that the very act of his description includes the nature of attention – therefore, this is the topic in another section. James imposed this condition on himself in his psychological investigation to discover mental phenomena. As Gerald E Myers commented that “James’s most striking introspections in *The Principles of Psychology* are strikingly personal, often defying immediate comprehension,”⁹⁰ it seems that James’ attempt to explain personal inquiry would turn out its impersonal aspect as if he proved his own conviction.

⁸⁹ *PP*, 591.

⁹⁰ Gerald E Myers, 20.

3.4 Impact of Darwinian Evolutionary Theory on the Consciousness of Self

James' argument of the "interest" of mind that raised a methodological question had resulted in his concept about the stream of consciousness. It was through his critique on associationist psychology and positivism that he persistently criticized Spencer. The stream of consciousness came to explain "the consciousness of self" in *The Principles of Psychology*; it was an intertwined process of his criticism and his reception of Darwin's natural selection. How then did James redefine the idea of self, established through English empiricism and under the influence of Darwinism?

The Self including the notion of its unity was questioned in his empirical quest. As we have argued in the proceeding chapter on Janet's concept of dissociation, the deep influence of the notion of unity resulted from what was called 'mental dusts' that were impossible to relate to the normal mental states. The psychological facts, such as non-volitional reactions, persisted in the anesthetic body of the hysteric due to a sensorial stimulation that was attributed to abnormality. Janet explained that "the movements determined by non perceived sensations are known by *no one*, for disaggregated sensations reduced to a state of mental dust are not synthesized in any personality."⁹¹ However, it was these observations that Janet made which allowed James to deepen his reflection on the self. Janet reported that the same movement could appear in another personality of the same person, "the secondary self", without any bare stimulation, but it was only seen in hysteric persons. This movement was caused by only "perceptions or intelligences,"⁹² and James understood of it that a memory could not be formed under the unified self, and that mental dusts are not fragments unrelated to personality but thoughts. Therefore, it means simply, "all thought tends to assume the form of personal consciousness."⁹³ Putting the emphasis on the impulse of thought, James attempts to scrutinize the idea of self, which Janet inherited from Locke through associationist psychology as well as his experimental psychology.

⁹¹ Janet, 316, quoted partly by James in *PP*, 224.

⁹² Janet, 316

⁹³ *PP*, 224, Janet 316-317.

The self—in chapter X “The consciousness of Self” in *The Principles of Psychology*—, is a total of whatever a person can call his/her bodily and psychical processes which the person possesses materially, socially, or spiritually. There are three parts of self: 1) its constituents 2) the emotions and feelings aroused by the constituents as Self-feelings, 3) Self-seeking and Self-conservation that the actions 1 and 2 bring out. The constituents of the Self were listed as “the material Self”, “the social Self”, “the spiritual Self” and “the pure Ego,” however, in the chapter of “The Self” in *Briefer Course*, James modified this category, eradicating the last one then, and replacing it with “the self as known” called “Me.” The Me was not like the Self (in majuscule), a total of various empirical *me(s)* that have three classes as “the material me”, “the social me,” and “the spiritual me.”⁹⁴ He excluded the metaphysical presumption of the unity of the self, or the Soul, for the sake of the psychology of a natural science. He used the term *Me* paired with the Kantian *I* conceived of as an apperception; the unity of perceptions was created by the transcendental Ego; James tried to explain the self as self-consciousness only by the feelings and the actions which were known to a person <*I*>.

In this perspective, he kept using introspection to understand the subjective feeling in an individual person despite its fallacies intrinsic to descriptions by language. To admit this limit of <*I*> would mean staying with the living feeling and the living action as what is felt for that person. James said a thought without the subject is impossible. It is close to Wittgenstein’s account on this problem: the utterance *to have a self* as if one owns himself as he owns a car was nonsense. However, he drew the case *to have a self* as not necessarily nonsense as far as it is to say the person is living.⁹⁵

This argument of how self-consciousness is due to biological life and is also deeply rooted in language. The influence of Darwinian evolutionism on James’ idea of self must be understood along these two lines. The interest of the mind James put

⁹⁴ BC, 160.

⁹⁵ Vincent Descombes, “Exister pour soi”, in *Le compément de sujet: enquête sur le fait d’agir de soi-même* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), 215-216. Cf. “As the etymologically myself used was ‘me-self’, as for the third person the objective case is ‘himself’, Sorabji argued on the self as myself meaning ‘me and me again.’ Richard Sorabji, *Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life, and Death*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), chapter 1.

forth has been explained by the philosophical influence of Charles Renouvier's concept of free will; James' reception of Darwin's natural selection is often understood as complementary in order to support his preoccupied moral question in terms of biology.⁹⁶ However, the historian of science Robert J Richards explains that James' subjective interest led him to develop the concept of the spontaneity of the mind to the point of his discovery of the independence of mind. In the lectures at Johns Hopkins and at the Lowell institute in the early 1870s, he explains how James "elaborated an extremely powerful evolutionary argument, one which would objectively and firmly ground his subjective desire to postulate an active and independent mind."⁹⁷ Richards insists the personal factors are not ignorable in the development of science, because James' subjective experiences in early 1870s made him put forward the power of mental faculties in the argument, and then he found the ideo-motor action—which explains mental autonomy by the action which would be done without a fiat of execution for the action.⁹⁸ According to Richards, James' interpretation of Darwin's view on the mind directed this discovery. However James did not know that Darwin had thought, "rather like Huxley, [that] mental faculties were determined by brain patterns," because Darwin only recorded it in his private notebooks.⁹⁹

As James argued in "Are We Automata?", then in Chapter V "The Automaton-Theory" in *The Principles of Psychology*, James explicitly rejected Thomas Henry Huxley's view on the mind as a machine submitted to the brain. Since Huxley's view of minds' automatism was based on the nervous system and on the reflexive nervous function, Huxley would ignore the function of the hemisphere highly developed in an animal with higher consciousness. James envisioned the independence of the mind with the brain as having its own role and function from which the mind is inseparable. He explained the relation of brain-mind metaphorically as follows: "the mind-history would run alongside of the

⁹⁶ Cf. Naomi Fujinami, *William James and Psychology: the Origin of Modern Psychology*, (Tokyo: Keisou Shobo, 2009), 125-128.

⁹⁷ Robert J. Richards, *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1989), 430.

⁹⁸ *PP*, 1130-1138.

⁹⁹ Richards, 432.

body-history of each man, and each point in the one would correspond to, but not react upon, a point in the other. So the melody floats from the harp-string, but neither checks nor quickens its vibrations; so the shadow runs alongside the pedestrian, but in no way influences his steps.”¹⁰⁰

This side-by-side relation between the mind-history and bodily-history in a person will be helpful to see James’ idea of the self. If the consciousness of the self could be understood as that of *me*, it was due to a feeling of sameness with what I have felt before. The feeling of “*I am the same self that I was yesterday*” concerns a diachronic self as a basis of “sense of personal identity,” which we have seen in Chapter 2. Despite the different aspects of self, this feeling of sameness maintains a psychical power for the same purpose and can be kept in the stream of consciousness in incessant change. According to James, “*the sense of our own personal identity, then, is exactly like any one of our other perceptions of sameness among phenomena,*” though it could be felt by a feeling of continuity and fundamental resemblance.¹⁰¹ As any perception is a perception of that moment, the feeling of self is due to the self as what gives consistency among different selves. Paradoxically, the feeling of sameness will be discovered in the very changing movement of consciousness.

The continuity is in the stream of thought: “It is a *Thought*, at each moment different from that of the last moment, but *appropriative* of the latter, together with all that the latter called its own. All the experiential facts find their place in this description, unencumbered with any hypothesis save that of the existence of passing thoughts or states of mind.”¹⁰² According to James, it is only these “passing thoughts” that allow one to become a “knower”. James explains:

Each pulse of cognitive consciousness, each Thought, dies away and is replaced by another. The other, among the things it knows, knows, its own predecessor, and finding it ‘warm,’ in the way we have described, greets it, saying: “Thou are *mine*, and part of the same self with me.” Each later

¹⁰⁰ *PP*, 136-137.

¹⁰¹ *PP*, 317.

¹⁰² *PP*, 379.

Thought, knowing and including thus the Thoughts which went before, is the final receptacle—and appropriating them is the final owner— of all that they contain and own. Each Thought is thus born an owner, and dies owned, transmitting whatever it realized as its Self to its own later proprietor.¹⁰³

In the successive stream of thoughts, James considers that “Thought is a vehicle of choice as well as of cognition,” and it is there by its appropriation or repudiations of the next thought as among different choices; “The passing Thought then seems to be the Thinker.”¹⁰⁴ It is only the feeling of the sameness in passing thought that James determined as being the knowing subject without the supreme fixed viewpoint of comparing and to associating the thoughts as constituting the known.

The mind states become the knower in a successive transition of thoughts because of their continuity in bodily life. The “warm” feeling demonstrates the continuity after some rupture in thoughts. Even if the continuity in a thought was lost by the alternation of attention to another matter or another reason, this warmth resurges over and over again from the different constituents of Me, such as bodily sensations and images of memories acquired through our past experiences. It helps discern the feeling of sameness as ‘mine’ in the actual situations. James described this perception of sameness through the experience of two children who slept in the same bed, and whose conversation was shut during their sleep:

So Peter’s present instantly finds out Peter’s past, and never by mistake knits itself on to that of Paul. Paul’s thought in turn is as little liable to go astray. The past thought of Peter is appropriated by the present Peter alone. He may have a *knowledge*, and a correct one too, of what Paul’s last drowsy states of mind were as he sank into sleep, but it is an entirely different sort of knowledge from that which he has of his own last states. He *remembers* his own states, whilst he only *conceives* Paul’s. Remember is like direct

¹⁰³ *PP*, 322.

¹⁰⁴ *PP*, 324.

feeling; its object is suffused with a warmth and intimacy to which no object of mere conception ever attains. This quality of warmth and intimacy and immediacy is what Peter's present thought also possesses for itself. So sure as this present is me, is mine, it says so sure is anything else that comes with the same warmth and intimacy and immediacy, me and mine.

Peter finds himself in the same bed and in the same room as where he was before he fell asleep. James calls these intimate feelings a "community of self," then it reappears beyond its rupture during the conscious states of sleeping.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, James finds a 'river' or a 'stream' would be appropriate as a metaphor for this continuity beyond the time gap. Because, "consciousness, then does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as 'chain' or 'train' do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows." Though the latter description would be used for the thought as what is known, the passing thought is also forming a personal identity as "a stream of subjective life" which remains continuous in a sudden change of direction or a stagnation¹⁰⁶— all the possible flows of river as James once described the flow of the Solimões River in Brazil.

Each feeling, being forgotten or left unnoticed, could disappear under a changing consciousness. There is a stream of consciousness at each specious present which act as an impulse. However, it is also in the flow it makes, and in this sense the stream of consciousness is continuous beyond a time-gap. James sought an explanation that did not need the unifying entity as the subject of feelings. The stream of consciousness is changing and forming by itself from what 'I' remembers; "Each part of which as 'I' can 1) remember those which went before, and know the things they knew; and 2) emphasize and care paramountly for certain ones among them as 'me,' and *appropriate to these* the rest. The nucleus of the 'me' is always the bodily existence felt to be present at the time. Whatever remembered-past-feelings, *resemble* this present feeling are deemed to belong to the

¹⁰⁵ *PP*, 232.

¹⁰⁶ *PP*, 232-233.

same *me* with it.... The *I* which knows them cannot itself be an aggregate.”¹⁰⁷

The stream of subjective life is a duration for a living thing and not all the length of life of a person. As abstract time is impossible to be felt invariably, the stream of consciousness in any phase is not independent from the living condition of a person with material bodily conditions including our brain activity. James thought if the auto-transformation process of perception were modified, it should go along with what happened in the brain. This mirrors James’ dualistic tendency about the mind-brain relation within which he sought to determine interactive relation between them: “Every sensation corresponds to some cerebral action. For an identical sensation to recur it would have to occur the second time *in an unmodified brain*. But as this, strictly speaking, is a physiological impossibility, so is an unmodified feeling an impossibility; for to every brain-modification, how ever small, must correspond a change of equal amount in the feeling which the brain subserves.” He took the same formulation in forming experience from the side of the mind: “experience is remoulding us every moment, and our mental reaction on every given thing is really a resultant of our experience of the whole world up to that date.”¹⁰⁸ If the being of myself is due to changing perception of experience in the past in relation to the present, its feeling of the sameness is separable from our brain activity because “the same brain may subserve many conscious selves, either alternate or coexisting.”¹⁰⁹ The experience of the living thing itself transforms its feeling of time.

Therefore, the continuity in the stream of consciousness needs to be understood by including brain physiology as well as the psychological description of feeling. James developed his physiological insight by applying Darwin’s theory to his understanding of the brain in the very early period of its exploitation. Although his interests in evolution had a scope beyond biology, he followed Darwin’s observations on biology and applied his idea of natural selection to understand brain function, which went along with psychological facts. His particular view of the spontaneity of the mind directed the functional approach in

¹⁰⁷ *PP*, 379.

¹⁰⁸ *PP*, 228.

¹⁰⁹ *PP*, 379.

his exploration about the mind-brain relation, and it was supported by the capacity of the brain such as physiological auto-recovery from injuries through self-modification, which was impossible for the machine.

The brain, in its condition as the mind, can evaluate what is ‘useful’ or ‘hurtful’ beyond its purely cognitive function,¹¹⁰ “a fighter for ends.”¹¹¹ In this way Darwin’s belief of survival as a good for creatures enters into the concept of the mind. James developed this Darwin’s insight in the concept of the mind as a “*selecting agency*.” H explains it as follows: “whether we take it in the lowest sphere of sense, or in the highest of intellection, we find it always doing one thing, choosing one out of several of the materials so presented to its notice, emphasizing and accentuating that and suppressing as far as possible all the rest. The item emphasized is always in close connection with some *interest* felt by consciousness to be paramount at the time.”¹¹² This selective function of the mind is a part of the “*instability*” of the cerebral hemispheres, which gives advantages to alternate the reaction depending on the situation: “they allow their possessor to adapt his conduct to the minutest alterations in the environing circumstances, any one of which may be for him a sign, suggesting distant motives more powerful than any present solicitations of sense. It seems as if certain mechanical conclusions should be drawn from this state of things. An organ swayed by slight impressions is an organ whose natural state is one of unstable equilibrium.”¹¹³ In order to overcome the automaton theory on the brain, James put forth his hypothesis on the autonomous character of the brain, which arranged itself depending on its outer situation.

There are two points in James’s postulate: First, the brain delivers “a motor act” by responding to stimulations of the environment and brain, “an engine of central nervous system” which transforms an energy into another without intermediation of consciousness. This transformation is due to this brain mechanism as “superadded commenting intelligence.”¹¹⁴ Second, consciousness stabilises the

¹¹⁰ *PP*, 144.

¹¹¹ *PP*, 144.

¹¹² *PP*, 142.

¹¹³ *PP*, 142.

¹¹⁴ *PP*, 144.

brain machinery, by fixing ends and selecting interests to make behavior for this exclusive purpose, so as not to be troubled by other details in the environment. According to Richards, James supported the independence of mind by two reasons: firstly, the reasoning power of the mind used principally for the self-preservation of animals seems to allow a shorter time for evolution than seemed explicable in the simple calculation of geological time. Secondly, the mind's reasoning is effective in animals' adaptation to their environment when the subjective feeling is connected to the outward condition.¹¹⁵

As for James' insistence on the spontaneity of the mind, it is notable that he also understood the mechanical character of Darwin's theory as a physiologist. Richards saw James' discovery of the independence of mind resulted from his reading of *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871) and conversation with Chauncey Wright in early 1870s. Wright participated in the Metaphysical club where he became a close interlocutor to James, and before that he joined with Gray and Wyman and conducted research with them to support Darwin. The confrontation with Wright, a strict positivist and Darwinist, helped to shape James' view before his criticism on Spencer, who was also a positivist and employed Darwin's theory. James had an admiration for Wright, his senior comrade, logician, and mathematician, who worked at the *American Ephemeris and Nautical Almanac*.

Although Wright's early death at forty-five in 1875 did not allow James communication with him over a long period, they shared an astuteness on mental phenomena despite the difference in their attitudes on positivism. His friend, the critic Charles Eliot Norton, wrote in 1877 that Wright was positivist but independent of any positivist school: "he used the term *positive*, as it is now commonly employed, as a general appellation to designate the whole body of thinkers who in the investigation of nature hold to the methods of induction from the facts of observation, as distinguished from the *a priori* school, who seek in the constitution of the mind the key to the interpretation of the external world. It was

¹¹⁵ Richards, 435.

only in this sense that he himself was a positivist.”¹¹⁶ Wright understood natural selection as non-teleological and as unknowable as a change of weather.¹¹⁷ In the obituary essay in *Nation* James summarized this view as a principal one by referring to the phrase “cosmical weather” Wright would use: “to describe the irregular dissipation and aggregation of worlds; so in contemplating the totality of being, he preferred to think of phenomena as the result of a sort of ontologic weather, without inward rationality, an aimless drifting to and fro, from the midst of which relatively stable and so (for us) rational combinations may emerge. The order we observe in things needs *explanation* only on the supposition of a preliminary or potential disorder; and this he pointed out is, as things actually *are* orderly, a gratuitous notion.”¹¹⁸

When the thoroughly mechanical character of natural selection bewildered even the supporters of Darwin among the evolutionists, Wright considered in the positivist fashion the level of “bare phenomenal facts” and separated it from explanation.¹¹⁹ This distinction would be seen in his understanding of natural selection. He wrote a review on Alfred Russell Wallace (1823-1913), who attained the idea of natural selection almost at the same time as Darwin.¹²⁰ Wallace exempted humans from natural selection because he considered the physiological particularities of the human (including his voluminous brain, his potential of vocal organs, and his vulnerable nakedness) to be outside of the law of utility.¹²¹ Wallace limited the application of the law of utility to the human mind, but Wright pointed out his own limitation was due not to natural theology but natural selection. Against Wallace’s view, Wright said, “strictly speaking, Natural Selection is not a cause at all, but is the mode of operation of a certain quite limited class of causes. Natural Selection never made it come to pass, as a habit of nature, that unsupported stone should move downwards rather than upwards. It applies to no part of inorganic

¹¹⁶ Norton “Biographical Sketch,” in Wright, xix.

¹¹⁷ Menand, 210.

¹¹⁸ *ECR*, 16.

¹¹⁹ *P*, 126.

¹²⁰ Chauncey Wright, “Limits of Natural Selection” *The North American Review*, (October 1870), reprinted in Chauncey Wright, *The Evolutionary Philosophy of Chauncey Wright: Philosophical Discussion* (Virginia: Thoemmes Press, 2000).

¹²¹ Wright, 104-105.

nature, and is very limited even in the phenomena of organic life.”¹²² For Wright, natural selection did not have to be verified by its apparent utility which would come to underestimate its reach by another metaphysical viewpoint. Wright’s influence on James’ Darwinism is obvious. In fact, Richards’ view about the background of James’ discovery above was discerned in Wright’s response.

While Darwin still hesitated to apply natural selection to the evolution of humans but tried to ascertain its possibility, Wright had embarked on his argument for the evolution of mind through his confrontation with Wallace. There were questions of will. Wallace had to seek the brainpower in the spiritualist; however, Frank X. Ryan pointed out that being solicited by Darwin, Wright tried to take this problem in the machinery of brain that Darwin conceived as “unconscious selection.”¹²³ It was developed in his important essay “Evolution of Self-consciousness” (1873), in which Wright described the agency of natural selection in mental activity, which might have influenced James’ early idea on the spontaneity of the mind and its agency. Wright saw an origin of self-consciousness in “reflective-attention.”¹²⁴ To have a clear image in our mind about the outward signs, the memory of our past experiences are to be employed. Signs as objective phenomena are not simply representations in the association of ideas resulting from the sensations of outward facts. It comes from the process of identifying a thought and a thing as the *coincidence* of outward and inward. The coincidence is “a germ of self-consciousness”:

Whether the vivid outward sign be a real object or event, of which the revived image is the counterpart, or whether it be a sign in a stricter meaning of the term, —that is, some action, figure, or utterance, associated either naturally or artificially with all similar objects or events, and, consequently, with the revived and representative image of them,—whatever the character of this outward sign may be, provided the representative image, or inward sign, still remains, in distinct consciousness,

¹²² Wright, 108.

¹²³ Frank X. Ryan, “Introduction” in Wright, xv-xi.

¹²⁴ Wright, 207.

its power as such, then the outward sign may be consciously recognized as a substitute for the inward one, and a consciousness of simultaneous internal and external suggestion, or significance, might be realized; and the contrast of thoughts and things, at least in their power of suggesting that of which they may be coincident signs, could, for the first time, be perceptible. This would plant the germ of the distinctively human form of self-consciousness.¹²⁵

3.5 Attention in Consciousness

The inward power that guides recognition of an outward among other inward represented images is attention. After the coincidence, it permits one to leave an influence to the next movement of the revival, by privileging mental images more vivid in relation to the precedent coincidence. Wright thought this same process could happen only inwardly, that is to say, the coincidence of represented image between inward images “in successions of inward suggestions, or trains of thought.”¹²⁶ This inward power as attention will continue to enforce the revival in certain groups of images. However, attention is not necessary intentional, because if we consider his mechanical description of the inward movement of the revival of images, the suggestion could abruptly come to mind. Wright thought the attention resides in thought, then operates on the thought: “The attention often skips intermediate steps in a train, or appears to do so. At least, the memory of steps, which appear essential to its rational coherency, has ceased when we revive the train or repeat it voluntarily.”¹²⁷ There is already a similar model of James’ concept of the stream of thought, where attention became a selective agency of natural selection—Wright’s metaphor of the “train” would seemed to be appropriate for James because it is where attention is operated and is operating too.

Following Wright’s view on self-consciousness, James had expected that there

¹²⁵ Wright, 210.

¹²⁶ Wright, 210.

¹²⁷ Wright, 210-211.

would be a physiological explication for the interest of mind. When he reviewed Wundt's *The Principles of Physiological Psychology* in 1875, he mentioned the link of Wright's argument to Wundt's research that "demonstrate[s] as it were mathematically what empiricists are too apt to ignore—he commented the spontaneous mental element in determining even the simplest experiences."¹²⁸ The concept of attention, which James examines in *The Principles of Psychology*, was seen with James's term *interest* as follows: "My Experience is only what I agree to attend to. Pure sensation is the vague, a semi-chaos, for the *whole* mass of impressions falling on any individual are chaotic, and become orderly only by selective attention and recognition. These acts postulate *interests* on the part of the subject,—interests which, as ends or purposes set by his emotional constitution, keep interfering with the pure flow of impressions and their association, and causing the vast majority of mere sensations to be ignored."¹²⁹

With Wright's insight on signs in mind activity, James believed in a conjunction between brain physiology and the mind activity with language. It is where he explained the feeling of *<I>* through empirical selves. James did not know Darwin's view of the brain-mind relation, however he could approach Darwin's foresight on the mind through Wright, differently from a mechanical understanding of the automata model of the brain.

James would be preoccupied with the role of subjectivity. When young James wrote on Wright's positivist attitude in "Anti-Nihilism" in 1873, he might have not yet fully understood what Wright meant by the *positive*. It has a tint of his harsh criticism on Spencer, however Wright's comment on James does not sound dismissive of his argument, but rather supports and deepens it from another side on the same matter. As Perry remarks, "[the] two men held similar views regarding actual experience, and that their difference was in some measure an imputed difference: arising on the one hand from Wright's *profession* of positivism, and on the other hand from James's avowed *sympathy* with the rationalistic or

¹²⁸ ECR, 300.

¹²⁹ ECR, 300.

transcendental school.”¹³⁰ The beginning of James’ quest for the self might be colored by his moral interest, however it is his interest in the subjectivity that is the key to embark on psychology with Darwinism.

Following Wright’s insight, James analyzed the application of natural selection as a mechanical process for mental activities. He also continued to verify *attention* as a faculty of the mind from the side of physiology and the observations reported from experimental psychology. Understanding the human as an animal, Wright pointed out, had been obstructed by the view that reasoning power has finality which was presupposed in natural theology. This view affected Wallace’s conception on the human mind as distinct from the animal’s reasoning. To understand the context in which James attempted to apply the concept of natural selection to the mind, Wright’s words seem to give an accurate account of its provenance for the scientific mind: “the organical sciences had previously made some use as instruments of scientific discovery, but which was appropriated especially to the reasoning of Natural Theology, has fallen to the province of the discussions of Natural Selection, and has been wonderfully enlarged in consequence.”¹³¹ The examination on the relation between the animal and human mind was an investigation on the facts that concern the historical evolution of reasoning itself, including theological thinking. If it needs to take into consideration the previous scientific thinking that has been challenged to its limits, natural selection is also to be used instrumentally.

As for zoological evolution, James came to admit two independent modes in the adaptation to the influence of environment of Lamarckian idea. Darwin’s accidental variation. Contrary to the first as an observable processes, the second is the physiological process taking place at a molecular level, and it remained “hidden.”¹³² On these two modes, in an essay “Grate Men and Their Environment” (1880), James appraised Darwin’s distinction between two independent cycles to “*produce*” the peculiarities and to “*maintain*” some of them, then he praised Darwin for admitting the existence of the first cause of production as a blind, chance

¹³⁰ *TCWJL*, 524.

¹³¹ Wright, 100.

¹³² *PP*, 1224.

process, then leaving its nature ignored. James said, “It was the triumphant originality of Darwin to see this, and to act accordingly. Separating the causes of production under the title of ‘tendencies to spontaneous variation,’ and relegating them to a physiological cycle which he forthwith agreed to ignore altogether, he confined his attention to the causes of preservation, and under the names of natural selection and sexual selection studied them exclusively as functions of the cycles of the environment.”¹³³

James undertook to explain those two cycles in the brain (as an organ) and its function, which arranged itself to various environments. The more he studied nervous systems and instinctive reactions, the more James began to admit that there are certain common mental activities between animals and humans: “I have no hesitation whatever in holding firm to the Darwinian distinction even here. I maintain that the facts in question are all drawn from the lower strata of the mind, so to speak—from the sphere of its least evolved functions, from the region of intelligence which man possesses in common with the brutes.”¹³⁴ It meant that Spencer’s teleological evolution of mind (owing to Lamarck’s idea of adaptation to the environment) began finally to vanish. James focused on variability in the mind as first a physiological observation: “as a matter of fact the new conceptions, emotions, and active tendencies which evolve are originally produced in the shape of random images, fancies, accidental out-births of spontaneous variation in the functional activity of the excessively instable human brain, which the outer environment simply confirms or refutes, adopts or rejects, preserves or destroys—selects, in short, just as it selects morphological and social variations due to molecular accidents of an analogous sort.”¹³⁵

The volume of the brain had been discussed in phrenology in the nineteenth century. While Wallace recognized the volume of brain as inexplicable from the viewpoint of the usefulness, James saw in it the source of the instability of mind then sought the meaning of this instability. According to James’ brain-mind relation concept which he acquired through his critique on the automaton theory, this

¹³³ *WTB*, 167.

¹³⁴ *WTB*, 184.

¹³⁵ *WTB*, 184.

instability of the brain goes along with that of the mind. This instability is seen in his view on instincts that “Every instinct is an *impulse*”¹³⁶ and that “Man has a far greater variety of *impulses* than any lower animal.”¹³⁷ The ability to arrange its reaction to the situation is first due to these great possibilities— the more suggestions, the more hesitation is caused. It may, as a result, destabilize acquired reactions, but by this reason it will be also creative. With this understanding on the brain, he stepped into explaining its inward activity which results in the thoughts brought out between ideas – which intellectualism would explain as purely intellectual activity: “we have the most abrupt cross-cuts and transitions from one idea to another, the most rarefied abstractions and discriminations, the most unheard-of combinations of elements, the subtlest associations of analogy; in a word, we seem suddenly introduced into a seething caldron of ideas, where every thing is fizzling and bobbing about in a state of bewildering activity, where partnerships can be joined or loosened in an instant treadmill routine is unknown, and the unexpected seems the only law.”¹³⁸ In the intellectual activity the productive cycle of natural selection was explained. In this mechanical process, these “scintillations” however remain blind to that person at the same time that they are deeply in the “idiosyncrasies of the individual.”¹³⁹ Explaining the idiosyncrasies in our creativity in arts and sciences and other activities, James insists, “whatever their differences may be, they will all agree in this— that their genesis is sudden, and as it were, spontaneous.”¹⁴⁰ In this way, he repeatedly turns to his argument on subjectivity in the same formulation about attention. This concerns the notion on attention, which was caused the cycles of natural selection.

In Chapter XI on Attention in the *Principles*, James reused the phrase in his review in Wundt’s work, “*My experience is what I agree to attend to,*” by recalling that English empiricist psychologists scarcely take into consideration “the perpetual presence of selective attention.”¹⁴¹ The different type of attention consists of the

¹³⁶ *PP*, 1006.

¹³⁷ *PP*, 1010.

¹³⁸ *WTB*, 185.

¹³⁹ *WTB*, 185.

¹⁴⁰ *WTB*, 185.

¹⁴¹ *PP*, 380.

processes to produce and to preserve both mental and physical reactions: “the interest itself, though its genesis is doubtless perfectly *natural*, *makes* experience more than it is made by it.”¹⁴² The attention is both passive and active in terms of physiology, and it needs to see the preservative process too. The attention is to be conceived as a node of the brain-mind relation. James tried to find out the connection between physiological nativism and mind power spiritualism.

James enlarged the concept of attention by its variations with three groups each include opposite characters: first group, attention on the sensorial objects and attention on ideal or intellectual objects; second group, immediate and derived; third group, passive, reflex, non-voluntary, effortless and active and voluntary.¹⁴³

Let us consider, the case of the combination of the first and second group: Passive sensorial attention is derived in the way of quasi-automatism, which is established as a habit by education. The previous experience gained through education becomes “the motive of attention”¹⁴⁴ It is with this type of attention, for example, that we notice a grammatical mistake by a sound while someone is speaking. On the contrary, passive intellectual attention is seen in, for example, a flash-back of an old memory that suddenly comes to mind. Though we cannot know why it came into the mind, it is in fact associated with a certain physiological or environmental condition. For, as it is often the case, when absorbed in meditation one cannot be attentive to something other than the interested object. According to James, attention is not clear in this type if it is immediate or derived.¹⁴⁵ In other words, it depends on where one’s attention is concentrated.

Besides the flash of a mental image during absorption, as for the matter one is absorbed in, it is accompanied by the active or voluntary attention. The active attention goes along with “effort” and is coexistent with the passive attention. James emphasised this term used by Dr. William Benjamin Carpenter in his observation on oblivion about his pain of neuralgia, during the lecture he gave “by determined

¹⁴² *PP*, 381.

¹⁴³ *PP*, 393-394.

¹⁴⁴ *PP*, 395.

¹⁴⁵ *PP*, 396.

effort”.¹⁴⁶ These “scintillations” exemplify not only the positive and passive aspects of attention, but also puts forth the question of the temporality of the stream of thought where plural attentions can exist simultaneously; each stream of consciousness appears and disappears as a plus, however they all belong to a stream of consciousness which gives it the plurality.

As for the plurality, one must be careful. James considers “the number of *things* we may attend to is altogether indefinite, depending on the power of the individual intellect, on the form of the apprehension, and on what the things are.” Then he continues, “But however numerous the things, they can only be known in a single pulse of consciousness for which they form one complex ‘object’, so that properly speaking there is before the mind at no time a plurality of *ideas*, properly so called.”¹⁴⁷

The selective attention is a pulse, which is “the ‘*span*’ of *consciousness*”. As the nature of the stream changes, James insists “*there is no such thing as voluntary attention sustained for more than few seconds at a time*, What is called sustained voluntary attention is a repetition of successive efforts which bring back, described the stream of thought, once entered, as ‘bearing him along.’”¹⁴⁸ The perpetual existence of selective attention, as Wright noticed, brought continuity in the stream of consciousness and this continuity may modify or make another attention disappear: “It has long been noticed, when expectant attention is concentrated upon one of two sensations, that the other one is apt to be displaced from consciousness for a moment and to appear subsequent; although in reality the two may have been contemporaneous events.”¹⁴⁹

The events are not on a simple time axe nor do they “objectively” exist. In the span of consciousness, the events could be contemporaneous events perceived with a slight time lag if they were seen from the chronological time line. The attention with effort lets us perceive clearly its object among the others, then repeatedly sustained, that attention arises an imagination to anticipate its object. The idea is

¹⁴⁶ *PP*, 397.

¹⁴⁷ *PP*, 383.

¹⁴⁸ *PP*, 397.

¹⁴⁹ *PP*, 387.

brought out from the effort: “the idea is to come to the help of the sensation and make it more distinct. It comes with effort, and such a mode of coming is the remaining part what we know as our attention’s ‘strain’ under the circumstances.”¹⁵⁰ This “anticipatory thinking” attains by itself the result of the action caused by the attention. James suggested the existence of the anticipatory thinking, by illustrating the skilled technique such as a smith sees sparks before his hammer goes down on the iron, or a surgeon sees a flow of blood on the arm before he inserts the needle in the skin. The idea resulting from sustained effort becomes anticipatory enough to precociously and inwardly bring about the result of that repeated attention, although that attention may possibly attain a different result.

It is impossible to articulate the time these attention-action processes take. It is difficult to understand all sensation from the nativistic point of view, because other feelings coexist. For this same reason, James questioned Wundt’s account on the reaction time of psycho-physical process—the transformation of the sensory into the motor current. Because it was an experiment minutely introspected by trained observers, their attention might have changed the reaction. The succession of feelings is not absolutely independent of the stream of consciousness, where other feelings coexist, and which is not a straight path of nervous stimulus. Therefore, in experiment, the psychologist’s subjectivity affects the “scientific” objectivity.¹⁵¹

As far as contemporaneous events are seen from the axe of *<I>*, they are compounded as a block in a span of consciousness. James had retained Wright’s idea of the coincidence between the inward and outward sign. If positivist Wright realized it by following each context of the outward facts and remained in calling it a germ of self-consciousness, James’s psychology attempted to describe it from the subjective context, where ‘my experience’ is produced and maintained.

¹⁵⁰ *PP*, 415.

¹⁵¹ *PP*, 388-389. See also *PP*, 95-96.

Chapter 4: Science of Religion and the Usage of Autobiography

After the publication of the *Principles*, replying to questions, and revising its significance and its limit as a natural science for its student text version *the Briefer Course*, James deepened his account of the possibility of science and its limits. He continued to follow new results from psychology as a natural science. On the other hand, his serious account of psychical phenomena with the Society of Psychical Research started in 1882; he engaged with the Society since its foundation as the only official member in America, and remained sympathetic to psychical phenomena beyond the natural sciences. Perry marked this period of aftermath following *The Principles of Psychology* with James' lecture "Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objections." James started this essay saying "Immortality is one of the great spiritual needs of man," as also seen in his sympathetic attitude to people's psychical phenomena (beside his severity as a scientist).¹ He tried to give some account of this need for immortality not by arguing about the independence of the mind from the body, but by emphasizing its functional dependence on the body from the viewpoint of the physiology of the nervous system, which might suggest life after the death. In the 1880s he lost both his parents, his brother Wilkinson, and his son Herman. He seemed to approach his father's view on life after death. The editing his father's manuscripts for his posthumous publishing, gave him an occasion to reconsider Henry Sr's thoughts.² When he knew his sister Alice did not have so long before her death, he suggested his view on the life after the death in his letter in July 1891, as if he was telling himself despite his scientific attitude: "And what a queer contradiction comes to the ordinary scientific argument against

¹ *EMR*, 77.

² "Introduction to the Literary Remains of the Late Henry James," *ERM*, 3-63.

immortality (based on body being mind's condition and mind going *out* when body is gone) when one must believe (as now, in these neurotic cases) that some infernality in the body *prevents* really existing parts of the mind from coming to their effective rights at all, suppresses them and blots them out from participation in this world's experience, although they are *there* all the time."³ According to Perry, it became clearer as a belief in James, which he tried to verify⁴-- however, as we have seen in the Chapter 2, it sounded imposing for Alice, and as if he ignored her individual experience.

The Varieties of Religious Experience, which was published in 1902 based on the Gifford lectures for natural religion at The University of Edinburgh, became another pivotal work to explain James's wide interest in mental phenomena.

This work consisted of an analysis of the numerous narratives of religious believers about their own experiences. As this work was subtitled "a study of human nature," he dealt with these documents with a descriptive approach in psychology by attempting to find a certain connection between other sciences and religious studies. In inquiring about the truth, if religion had been regarded as what was opposed to science, even on the side of religion, it became no more evident what religion means by the term used in a number of different practices of people. Although James' inquiry in religious experiences remains in the Christian tradition despite his mention of other existing religions, he tried to focus his argument on the human experiences from the side of each believer. Keeping his position as a psychological researcher, James advanced his central interest in the ethical question for this work, which developed into his later arguments on moral practices beyond religious practices.

In this chapter, we will focus on the *Varieties*, in which James directly developed his interest in autobiography as a material of psychology, and which contains contact points of these different spheres in individual life. In the first part of this chapter, we will see the framework James envisaged as science of religion by employing psychology, then focus on autobiographical texts as an object of research

³ Letter of WJ to AJ (July 6, 1891), *Corr. VII*, 178.

⁴ *TCWJ II*, 133.

and James' classification of them in order to support his argument on religion. Then, in the latter part, we will look at how James enlarged his opinion on religious experience to the ethical question through his examination in his psychology as we have seen developed with experimental psychology and Darwinian evolutionism. He pursued his research as he did for psychology as a natural science, through the examination of the subject as well as the methodological examination. To understand this process, not only autobiographical texts which he collected for the research, but also his usage of his own autobiographical episodes need to be examined for their significance.

4.1 Science of Religion and *The Will to Believe*

The Varieties of Religious Experience, which was published in 1902 based on the Gifford lectures for Natural Religion at the University of Edinburgh, became another pivotal work in which James explained his wide interest in mental phenomena. James' biographers have sought biographical elements in the *Varieties* by comparing his personal experiences with certain types of the models of religious experience he dealt with insistently in sympathetic reading. Reading the *Varieties*, which contains many long quotations, may mean for its readers that they must re-read with James a number of religious experiences as case studies. It also means following his sympathetic reading of the subjective experiences. The lengthy quotations allow to elucidate the case studies' subjective experiences with God or another divine entity, and may sometimes be impressive enough to obscure James' purpose of establishing of a science of religion. James did not suppress his emotional reaction in his inquiry on the documents. It is obvious that his inquiry about the religious experience succeeded in overcoming the difficulties James met in his research in psychology. Therefore, the development of the subjective method is the way for a scientific approach to take place through the precise observation of the facts and to advance his understanding of them. To make clear as far as possible his position on his own research objects, which include testimonies and autobiographical documents containing his own was James'

own approach, rather than taking a distance from the subject in the process of the analysis. His sympathetic reading is to be considered at first in this way—though his sister Alice’s repugnance toward his imposing sympathy for her situations of malaise suggests that there are the problems in James’ approach, as we will see later.

The term “religious experience” is composed by two words, implying their relation to science, and both of them are encumbered with the historical context of the era in which James lived. To understand his project for the science of religion, we firstly reexamine the schema of the *Varieties* in relation to the problems in psychology we had seen in the preceding chapter, and we refer to some more recent critics on this work published around a hundred years ago.

The definition of religion in the *Varieties* is provisionally proposed in order to make clear its subject as follows: “religion... shall mean for us *the feeling, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.*”⁵ James precisely limited his research to aspects of the individual. His exclusion of institutional aspects in the interpretation of religion has been criticized (it was the same era in which the French sociologist Emile Durkheim sought the explanation for the origin of religion in society by inquiring into its primitive forms).⁶ Although James did not support Spencer’s view of social Darwinism, Richard Hofstadter pointed out, that it was inevitable for American intellectuals to take it into consideration in any way⁷ Therefore, James’ ‘individualism’ is rooted in society in another sense. When he insisted upon the experience of ‘individualism,’ and rather than society, it was a way to differentiate himself from a society conceived by the Spencerians in America.

On the other hand, he insists upon experience in itself rather than upon the cause and the institution, which can justify and impose a certain action of individuals. As Menand illustrated, the Civil War deeply impacted American intellectuals and influenced their appreciation of verifying through experience. The early pragmatists

⁵ *VRE*, 34.

⁶ Emile Durkheim, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, 5th ed. (Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France: 1968). Durkheim commented on James’ individual religion of *VRE*, 599.

⁷ Richard Hofstadter. *Social Darwinism in American Thought*. (1944; repr., Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 33.

had to confront the idea of unity put forward in British empiricism. The concept of experience itself came to be examined. James used the word “experience” in his *Principles*; it did not yet have a specific meaning as *pure experience*, therefore for him it was the same as feeling and action. Thus, the concept of religion defined above in the *Varieties* was hypothetically posed to frame his study with the help of psychology.

Still, James’ idea of individual religion was rooted in the Protestant tradition of Christianity. As for the composition of the chapters in the *Varieties*, Niebuhr noted that James advanced his analysis by following the narrative of the evangelical conversion, and by classifying the types of religious experience by the categories of “healthy-mindedness”, then “sick soul”, next the divided-self which attains conversion. It has the same structure as the traditional plot of St. Augustine’s confession to the conversion, though he used little of Augustine’s text.⁸ The western autobiography, whether it is religious or not, has been influenced to a certain extent by the Christian narratives on the modeled individual experience as its origin has been often identified with Saint Augustine’s *Confession*. The confession narrative tends to be toward Protestant saintliness. On this point, Hollinger explained, in addition to Niebuhr’s analysis, that James treated Catholic examples by putting them into relation with the Protestant examples and by comparing their ascetic piety; Hollinger commented that the *Varieties* is written upon the supposition of “certain religious sensibilities” within its audience, with whom James shared the cultural tradition and the religious experience in order to lead them to “the core of religion.”⁹ Both of them understood that James’ strategy was to lead a continuous conversation on religion from different positions. James started by a series of analyses on the quotation of a British Quaker, George Fox, insisting on the pathological aspects of his mental state. However, it was to invite and reject the view of medical materialism on religious experience, which ignores the spiritual value of religious experience; there was a

⁸ Niebuhr, “William James on religious experience,” in *The Cambridge Companion to William James*, ed. Ruth Anna Putnam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1997), 225-232.

⁹ David A. Hollinger, “Damned for ‘God’s Glory’: William James and the Scientific Vindication of Protestant Culture” in *William James and a Science of Religions*, ed. Wayne Proudfoot (New York: Columbia University Press: 2004), 11.

reductionism in the explanation offered by medical materialism, and on the other hand, by dogmatism in religion. Instead of imposing a dogmatic judgment, the purpose of the *Varieties* was not to deal with the ontological question of religion but to attempt to displace the focus from its origin to its function and value.

The science of religion, as he had continued to examine introspections in psychology, was based on the case study of individuals. James sought the points that would allow him to explain the meaning of religious experience for the life of the individual, whether it is pathological, original but illegitimate enough for organized religion. We need to recall the way James tried to limit the metaphysical premises to understand the mind states through natural science, despite his larger interest in philosophical questions intrinsic to psychology, to which he sometimes devoted his writing. If psychology has been conceived by limiting itself according to the norm of natural science, in another moment psychology would be open to the wider context in the quest to understand mental life.

The same can be said for the science of religion. Although the *Varieties* is a large work published as a book with the title of “religious experience,” as James commented, it remained a descriptive work on individual experiences, with only a suggestive philosophical reflection on James’ view on religion. That is, it consists only in part of his thoughts on religion. As far as he tried to configure the science of religion, to enter into the argument on what religion is for life, he risks exceeding the limit of science, where he sought the points of contact with other disciplines through psychology. In this sense, metaphysics would be one of them; James tried to keep open a channel to switch into it from religious experience. The strategy to avoid dogmatism was to put the different views into either conjunctive or disjunctive relation. He said, “let us play fair in this whole matter, and be quite candid with ourselves and with the facts.”¹⁰

James needed to take over “reason’s task” which philosophy had undertaken, and hoped “to find an escape from obscure and wayward personal persuasion to truth objectively valid for all thinking men” and “to redeem religion from unwholesome privacy, and to give public status and universal right of way to its

¹⁰ *VRE*, 21.

deliverances.”¹¹ Is it possible to say that in his question in the analysis of religious experience, James tried to deal with subjective truth from the point of inter-subjectivity from the beginning? His analysis focuses on religious sentiments, and he employed there his theory of emotion. For this purpose, by employing the psychological facts on religious experience, and by taking the task of reason to which philosophy had been devoted, he attempted to the science of religion. To taking reason into account, on the other hand, as we have seen in the previous chapter, is not independent from subjective aspects such as emotion and feelings.

Therefore, to analyse religious experience by spiritual judgment for the religious value, he pursued it as usual through the examination of the subject as well as its method: on the one hand he did this through the analysis of autobiographical texts as literary sources about personal experiences, and on the other hand through pragmatism as the method of truth inquiry. The idea of pragmatism was mature enough to be developed as his epistemological position. As James rendered homage to its birth in Pierce’s essay in 1878, the pragmatic process of the hypothesis and its verification has been supported by his psychological research without being named as such.

After his publishing of *The Principles of Psychology*, and after handing over his laboratory to Wundt’s student Hugo Munsterberg in 1894, the following period can be understood as his preparation for the essay *The Will to Believe* in 1896, which was published with his other essays written in the 1880s. It is also notable that he revised the concept of psychology as a natural science once again for a student text, *Psychology: Briefer Course* (1892), by cutting down his philosophical comments in the former work. Though it used to be understood as a rupture between experimental psychology and metaphysical reflections, it was rather during this period that he continued to advance the epistemological question he had confronted in the *Principles*. He continued to follow the current findings of psychology more freely and with wider vision, besides his psychical research and his reading of documents of religious experience.¹²

¹¹ *VRE*, 341.

¹² Following Perry’s biography, Jamesian scholars have appreciated a rupture between his

The essay “The sentiment of rationality” gives an account of the interdependence of feeling and reason, which he had ameliorated since his 1880 version with the same title. James said, “our reasons are ludicrously incommensurate with the volume of our feeling, yet on the latter we hesitatingly act.”¹³ As he explained, attention operates on physiological function and emerges from it, Feeling is not only passive but interacts with subjectivity. It leads to the schema of pragmatism about how knowledge becomes true through an action on the belief. He continues, saying what: “the belief (as measured by action) not only does and must continually outstrip scientific evidence, but that there is a certain class of truths of whose reality belief is a factor as well as a confessor; and that as regards this class of truths faith is not only licit and pertinent, but essential and indispensable. The truths cannot become true till our faith has made them so.”¹⁴

In addition, his essay “The Psychology of Belief”, which came to be integrated in Chapter XXI “The Perception of Reality” in the *Principles*, gives an account on this point: when one’s entire faculty of attention is absorbed on the mental object, the mind helps believing it is real, then it comes to exist as a mental existence in its own space. The mental facts, according to James, “are situated in their own spaces, the space in which they severally appear, and neither of those spaces is space in which outer realities’ exists.”¹⁵

It suggests his later argument on pluralistic universe. It is notable that this essay came out in the same year as the publication of Janet’s thesis on subconsciousness. The psychologist’s view on the sub-consciousness of his subjects helped James advance his view which supposes not only that the consciousness may be dissociated but also that consciousness is in relation to the outer context. James puts

psychological research and his metaphysical reflection. However, the two approaches of James developed continuously. Cf. Lamberth, David C. William James and the Metaphysics of Experience. 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Girel, Mathias, “William James: Une Psychologie Paradoxale?” in *William James: Psychologie et cognition*, ed. Claude Debru, Christiane Chauviré and Mathias Girel (Paris: Editions Pétra, 2008), 151-174.

¹³ *WTB*, 80. James noted on its first version “this article is the first chapter of a psychological work on the motives which lead men to philosophise. It deals with the purely theoretic or logical impulse. Other chapters treat of practical and emotional motives and in the conclusion an attempt is made to use the motives as test of the soundness of different philosophies”, “The *Text of The Will to Believe*” editor Fredson Bowers in *WTB*, 326.

¹⁴ *WTB*, 80.

¹⁵ William James, “The Psychology of Belief,” in *The Mind*, (July 1889): 326.

it as follows, which will support his analysis in the *Varieties*:

Really there are more than two sub-universes of which we take account, some of us this one, and others of that. For there are various categories both of illusion and of reality, and alongside of the world of collective error, there are the worlds of abstract reality, of relative or practical reality, of ideal relations, and there is the supernatural world.¹⁶

This goes along with his methodology for the science of religion. As he had tried to keep psychology in direct or indirect contact with physiology and philosophy, in the same way, he tried to connect religion to these domains. He settled the way to see the object as follows: “Every object we think gets at last referred to one world or another of this or of some similar list. It settles into our belief as a common-sense object, a scientific object, an abstract object, a mythological object, an object of some one’s mistaken conception, or a madman’s object; and it reaches this state sometimes immediately, but often only after being hustled and bandied about amongst other objects until it finds some which will tolerate its presence and stand in relations to it which nothing contradicts.”¹⁷ To say it differently, the scientific agnostic also configures its object in this way. The study of ‘religious experience’ is a human experience as he subtitled the *Varieties*; James embarked on the field intertwined with religion, philosophy and science, which all lost their once evident ability to give a *sine qua non* explication on human experience. It was a scientific inquiry in which James threw his own experiences by making clear his relationship to the subject.

James came to his argument of the *Will to Believe* on religious belief: “*Our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds; for to say, under such circumstances, ‘Do not decide, but leave the question open,’ is itself a passional decision—just like deciding yes or*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 328.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 330.

no—and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth.”¹⁸ The following comment by Rorty is significant; James failed to reject the idea that pragmatism could not accept, that is “the idea the mind is divided neatly down the middle into intellect and passion, and that possible topics of discussion are divided neatly into the cognitive and the noncognitive ones.” The traditional division of intellect and emotion, when one opts for the religious hypothesis by this principle, will stop the argument on religion that we otherwise may continue to argue on.¹⁹ As a result, the religious hypothesis in question may become closed.

Obviously these ideas were not in the line of James’ pragmatism, he exemplified by the way how the mind following its selective nature continued to make selections. It must be a little hasty to criticize, following Rorty’s view of pragmatism, James’s hypothesis on religious belief. Indeed, James had already embarked on the description on the religious experience when he wrote the argument in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Comparing various religious experiences by making them into conversation among them, his sympathetic attitudes to them overwhelmed, then, affected the methodology. This attention to the other’s experiences may stress his argument more than usual. Still, since religion is the field that concerns this kind of subjective engagement, he could take the risk. This suggests that in attempting to shape the science of religion, James put himself in the difficult equilibrium of subjectivity and objectivity as a researcher.

4.2 Autobiography as Literary Source of Emotion

The analysis of autobiography is a part of the evolution of James’ psychological thinking. Along with subjective methods and continuous reflection on the usage of introspection, analysing the conscious states in texts written in the first person became his main project. The word autobiography contains three elements – *auto* (sameness, self) – *bio* (life) – *graphy* (trace, write) – and in this section we will

¹⁸ *WTB*, 20.

¹⁹ Richard Rorty, “Religious Faith, Responsibility, Romance,” in *The Cambridge Companion to William James*, ed. Ruth Anna Putnam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1997), 90-91.

examine how James used autobiographical texts as his objects of research on the basis of our argument of his idea of self in Chapter 3. In the *Varieties*, in order to understand “religious feeling and religious impulses,” he affirmed “I must confine myself to those more developed subjective phenomena recorded in literature produced by articulate and fully self-conscious men, in works of piety and autobiography.”²⁰ James called such texts “*documents humains*” in French, supposedly used by Emile Zola²¹ — it would be the conceptual influence from the literary naturalism. James’ understanding of the materials of research concerning the religious experience raises a problematic question on the autobiographical texts. Firstly what is the “religious”? If religion were *sui generis*, which character defines a feeling as a religious feeling? Secondly, it is about the character of autobiographical text, when we dealt with Alice’s diary: her struggle showed the difficulty of writing about one’s own experience. Will not the process of extracting the impersonal aspects and general points of religious experience as common human experience contradict presupposition that the author’s subjective life is found in texts written in the first person? Before that, how did he understand this description of feeling?

In the first chapter “Religion and neurology,” he insists upon the spiritual judgment to evaluate religious opinion: “judgments based on our own immediate feeling primarily; and secondarily on what we can ascertain of their experiential relations to our moral needs and to the rest of what hold as true. *Immediate luminousness*, in short, *philosophical reasonableness*, and *moral helpfulness* are the only available criteria.”²² The autobiographical materials were considered to appropriate to examine religion on these three criteria. The two questions above are intertwined with his method which he settled against ontological judgment, medical materialism, and dogmatism in organized religion. We will examine at first the concept of emotion in order to see how James understood religious feeling, then we

²⁰ *VRE*, 12.

²¹ Jean-Marie Guyau, “Le Roman psychologique et sociologique de nos jours,” in *L’art au point de vue sociologique*, text reviewed by Annamaria Contini and Stéphane Douailler (Paris: Fayard, 2001), 201.

²² *VRE*, 23.

will examine the problem of the description of emotion, and lastly we will look at to the concept of religion for James.

As a condition of religious sentiment, James partly admitted the pathological view about the psychopathic temperament characterised by “ardor and excitability of character,” “extraordinary emotional susceptibility,” which it would be explained often by the feeble intellect.²³ However, as this relation between emotion and intellect will be reexamined, James insisted on the emotionality as a “*sine qua non* on moral perception; we have the intensity and tendency to emphasis which are the essence of practical moral vigor.”²⁴ The emotionality has a positive role in letting the person go beyond “the sensible world”– and, furthermore, to use his other expression for his later argument on morals, “the use of the worldly prudence.”²⁵ Notably, for the vision of his plural universe, he assumed that the instable temperament due to strong religious sentiment “should introduce one to regions of religious truth, to corners of the universe, which your robust Philistine type of nervous system...would be sure to hide forever from its self satisfied possessors.”²⁶

James’ theory of emotion was presented as follows: “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.”²⁷ This theory, confusingly known as the James-Lange theory despite certain differences between them, invited a continuous criticism on whether, as they said, the physiological process due to perception exists prior to the emotion. While Carl Lange insisted upon the fact that the “vaso-motor effect”²⁸ is aroused for the emotion, James inductively assumed that there is no special brain center for emotion but that “there must be a process of some sort in the nerve-centers for emotion, and it simply defines that process to consist of afferent currents.”²⁹ His emphasis is on “a tendency to feel” by comparing it with instinct as

²³ *VRE*, 27.

²⁴ *VRE*, 28.

²⁵ *VRE*, 287.

²⁶ *VRE*, 28-29.

²⁷ *PP*, 1064, originally presented in “What Is an Emotion?” in *Mind* 9, (April 1884).

²⁸ *EPS*, 300, James replied to the objections in “The Physical Basis of Emotion,” *Psychological Review*, no.1, (September 1894).

²⁹ *EPS*, 306.

“a tendency to act” to the same object.³⁰

This argument touched on the genesis of emotion; “*instinctive reactions and emotional expressions thus shade imperceptibly into each other.*”³¹ The instincts are numerous. They react to the object by suggesting action directed to it. This reaction has been acquired in the process of evolution. For some of the instincts include what we can no more know why they exist, or even and we can not take notice of their existence. On the other hand the emotion varies, arousing on the same object for instincts, its form cannot be ideally fixed “like the old immutable species in natural history.”³² Considering the common aspect in human and animal instincts, James conceived the emotion as an infinitely variable bodily expression to the physiological change, for which we give explanation. The emotion is aroused by perceiving the object at some point. However it is deeply individualized through its subjective bodily feeling so that it can be aroused without noticing perception of the object. James explains that “our emotions must always be inwardly what they are, whatever be the physiological ground of their apparition. If they are deep pure worthy spiritual facts on any conceivable theory of their physiological source, they remain no less deep pure spiritual and worthy of regard on this present sensational theory. They carry their own inner measure of worth with them.”³³ Emotion as an aspect works thoroughly inwardly, and when it seemed to be purely spiritual, it has an inward physiological process. To stimulate this process, according to James, there must be “mind-stuff” when emotion is aroused.³⁴ Without devaluation of the physiological basis, James assumed that purely spiritual emotion understood in this sense has its value in the life individual’s life. It was his reply to the medical materialism and the reason he tried to stay with personal history, which allowed him to approach better that value.

Still, the description of emotion is inevitably difficult if one assume that it should fully represent one’s object. It concerns the problem that introspection had

³⁰ BC, 324.

³¹ PP, 1509.

³² PP, 1064.

³³ PP, 1068-1069.

³⁴ PP, 1067.

exemplified as we saw in the previous chapter. In accepting the fallacy of introspection that it is impossible to observe immediate feeling, James continued to seek a possible way of observing mental facts. James' descriptive psychology was a project directed against the impossibility of description by giving its neurophysiological context. This suggests his view on description: "Classification and description are the lowest stage of science. They sink into the background the moment questions of genesis are formulated, and remain important only so far as they facilitate our answering these."³⁵ The classification on emotion came to seek the unity of self, on which James had revealed idealism even in the positivist attitude.³⁶ The description can be done hypothetically, therefore the classification of emotion as well, and James maintained his hypothetical attitude toward descriptive psychology.

How did James see historicity in the emotion as expression? He pointed out "how any given 'expression' of anger or fear 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."³⁷ This combination of physiological mechanics and history remind us of his view on natural selection regarding the double aspect of *producing* and *maintaining*.³⁸ It seems to suggest his view on history that is associated with the latter under the condition of the first. In fact, James explains that emotional reactions are not teleological but rather accidental, due to the nervous-center being evolved as such.³⁹

Therefore, at the descriptive level of the expression of subjective feeling, if we don't know about the context, of expression of subjective feeling, it will be impossible to understand. Examining Lange's description on sorrow, Darwin's on fear, and Mantegazza's on hatred, James pointed out how they were generalized from the expressions of emotion which were infinitely variable. He explains "we

³⁵ *PP*, 1069.

³⁶ *EPS*, 303.

³⁷ *PP*, 1070.

³⁸ See Chapter 3.

³⁹ *PP*, 1097.

should more over find that our descriptions had no absolute truth; that only applied to the average man; that every one of us, almost, has some personal idiosyncrasy of expression, laughing or sobbing differently from his neighbor, or reddening or growing pale where others do not.”⁴⁰ It is impossible to represent a full account on the inwardly functional emotion by description. The individual history tells one’s maintaining power. Emotion being already a historical expression, its description may misread what is expressed. The focus on the impossibility of description brought James to a constructivist viewpoint regarding individual development in the physiological explanation. Although it questioned the naturalists’ description, his understanding did not go beyond the scientific viewpoint shared, even though he focused on individuality.

I have embarked on James’ theory of emotion because it is the way James understood the emotionality of religious sentiment. As far as religious sentiment is a sentiment, religious emotion is an emotion as well as any other. James kept attempting to describe of the subjective feeling by explaining and by giving a context for how he saw it.

To argue on feeling, methodologically James used his own introspection or the observations on his children from his biographical episodes.⁴¹ Given the difficulty of the description of the feeling, implied by the subjective method, it seems that James used this observation in the methodological way. Autobiography is a part of his inquiry in descriptive psychology. Gordon W. Allport talked about James at the beginning of his historical work *The Use of Personal Document in Psychological Science*. By the disenchantment about “the normal-average-adult-human-mind” that the early experimental psychology inherited from the quest for uniformity and typicality, the case studies and the personal documents came to be more focused.

⁴⁰ *PP*, 1064.

⁴¹ His examples, such as on the instinct of locomotion, were by recalling what his father told to him (*PP*, 1204); on the ripening of the instincts from the reactions to vermins or a pug by his children (*PP*, 1305; *PP*, 1305;); on a parental instinct of mother for the child or sea-sickness (See, chapter 1) that are understandable with his biography despite the lack of precision. He lost his son Herman in 1883 and told the same episode in his letter (*Corr. VI*, 44), the patient faced his mother’s death which he had encountered (*PP*, 1088-1089).

According to Allport, although James had used the personal document to make psychology as a science of “finite individual minds,” by still accepting to follow inquiry on “mind-in-general” in the *Principles*, it was only in the *Varieties* that he established his method of using personal documents. Allport commented, on how James experiment with his idea of pure experience, then, for James, “no other method seemed to him available for discovering the fundamental ways of men coming to terms with the universe.”⁴²

Once again, we need to retain the reach of his subjective method. If James chose autobiographical texts as his object of research, he had to clarify how he understood the intersection of the history of the first person and the third person. How did he understand that his subjective engagement might possibly touch upon that, while seeking for a description of the religious experience? As far as his subject concerns the beliefs of individuals, it did not allow him to stabilize his status as a scientific observers. Allport’s comment is significant of the fact that James firstly used autobiography in the methodological way in the *Varieties*, which, according to him, is nothing but the psychology of religion. However James brought in attempting a science of religion his attention to the religious experience of different persons. The condition James estimated for his position was only justified by supposing the world as follows:

A conscious field *plus* its object as felt or thought of *plus* an attitude towards the object *plus* the sense of a self whom the attitude belongs- such a concrete bit of personal experience may be a small bit, but it is a solid bit as long as it lasts; not hollow, not mere abstract element of experience, such as the ‘object’ is when taken all alone. It is a *full* fact, even though it might be an insignificant fact; it is of the *kind* to which all realities whatsoever must belong; the motor currents of the world run through the life of it; it is on the line connecting real event with real events.⁴³

⁴² Gordon W. Allport, *The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1942), 3-7.

⁴³ *VRE*, 405.

James needed to place himself in the world of pure experience as well as where his objects were. The world consisting of personal experience is a living world maintained by the connections of realities. As emotion is due to the nerve-center currents, James supposes the motor currents run through this complex block of experience without seeking the centrality in the experience world. These currents are aroused by the individual's experience in the world. The subjective feeling is describable but what is described will not be absolute fact. For, according to James:

It is absurd for Science to say that egoistic elements of experience should be suppressed. The axis of reality runs solely through the egoistic places— they are strung upon it like so many beads. To describe the world with all the various feelings of the individual pinch of destiny, all the various spiritual attitudes, left out from the description— they being as describable as anything else would be something like offering a printed bill of fare as the equivalent for a solid meal.⁴⁴

James suggests what is the world as that of pure experience. With this vision, James understood the character of autobiographical texts to be that which described one's own experience, but at the same time, he defined his attitude in reading and in re-describing them. To describe the religious experience is not to reproduce one's experience but to attempt to stand at the intercourse of the axis of reality that each subjective feeling maintains. Without subjectivity, the describer cannot attain the point of encountering the other current of the world.

As for the description of religious experience, Richard Rorty's comments on James' "world of pure experience" in the *Varieties* is suggestive. While a pragmatist James considers that the hypothesis is given by the individual or the community to solve the problem and to gain happier lives, as for religion, James does not consider the same kind of hypothesis. When James says about pure experience, "as soon as we deal with private and personal phenomena as such, we deal with realities," Richard Rorty regards it as a "chimera" of "the

⁴⁴ *VRE*, 394.

phenomenological attitude” and “the first-person point of view,” which betrays pragmatism.⁴⁵ However, the world, to which James arrived through his descriptive psychology, is considered with pragmatism. Should it be the end of pragmatism? At least, even if Rorty’s comment is pertinent, James seemed to try to reveal the realities for the phenomenologist by personal history. This discussion concerns rather the impossibility of arguing on religion as a *sui generis*. While Rorty considers religion as replaceable by what has the same significance to the individual phenomena, James certainly kept a particular sphere to religion. With the argument on the perception of reality as well as emotion, James had an insight on the emotion aroused by the object outwardly, as non-cognizable, moreover inwardly its origin is unknowable. In the same way, “religion” has its own value inwardly—for this explanation James uses the expression of “cash-value” in a pragmatist way .

As Proudfoot said, religious experience cannot be fully explained in terms of naturalism without its theistic context,⁴⁶ however, if we opposed religion to science, the internal explication of religious experience would fail. To what extent can we keep pragmatism developed in its Peircian line? Is James’ pragmatism for the matter, including the religious question, useful to continue the discussion? James is motivated to explain the universal right for the deliverance and salvation by religion on the one hand, and to test the concept of pure experience on the other hand. If it is so, why did he try to keep the tension between religion and science? One of the answers is, in giving an explanation, James’ re-description of religious experience puts religion in relation with science by the observation and argues on that relation. Allport interprets, James’ attempt at testing his radical empiricism, so that James had to take a pluralist attitude. If so, it is better to say that the hypothesis on the pure experience supported by James’ belief on the value of the first-person point of view had verified from inside James’ pluralism. The idea of pure experience was a hypothesis about the possibility that personal history works inwardly in an

⁴⁵ Richard Rorty, “Some Inconsistencies in James’s Varieties,” in *William James and A Science of Religions : Reexperiencing The Varieties of Religious Experience*, ed. Wayne Proudfoot (New York : Colombia University Press, 2004), 94.

⁴⁶ Wayne Proudfoot, *Religious Experience*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 188-189.

individual, and the idea of pure experience comes to reveal its pluralism. They are the same thought, but it appears differently depending on how we situate James in relation to it. It means, the personal will be changed into the impersonal; at least, it is simply particular to the person. The individuality which formed inwardness is dissolved as follows:

Individuality is founded in feeling; and the recesses of feeling, the darker, blinder strata of character, are the only places in the world in which we catch real fact in the making, and directly perceive how events happen, and how work is actually done.⁴⁷

Radical empiricism considers revising “the bare relation of *withness* between some parts of the sum total of experience and other parts” on which the empiricists put too much emphasis, and which rationalists have a tendency to ignore. James explained it two years later in the *Varieties*:

Radical empiricism, on the contrary, is fair to both the unity and the disconnexion. It finds no reason for treating either as illusory. It allots to each its definite sphere of description, and agrees that there appear to be actual forces at work which tend, as times goes on, to make the unity greater. The conjunctive relation that has given most trouble to philosophy is the *co-consciousness transition*, so to call it, by which one experience passes into another when both belong to the same self.⁴⁸

Revealing an existing disjunctive relation between science and religion or empiricism and rationalism, he sees the motor currents of the world of pure experience go through being aroused and formed by individuals.

As for the motor currents of individual emotions, James sees his “palpitating documents” as telling “what Kant calls a ‘sthenic’ affection, an excitement of the

⁴⁷ *VRE*, 395.

⁴⁸ *ERE*, 24.

cheerful, expansive, ‘dynamogenic’ order which, like any tonic, freshens our vital powers.”⁴⁹ He called it “faith-state” by using the term of James Henry Leuba, in which he found then “Taking creeds and faith-state together, as forming ‘religions,’ and treating these as purely subjective phenomena, without regard the question of their ‘truth,’ we are obliged, on account of their extraordinary influence upon action and endurance, to class them important biological functions of mankind.”⁵⁰

The autobiographical text has two aspects: first, the autobiography of others, in which James tried to understand their inwardly adjusted world, and second, the method of autobiography on his scientific project by which he kept his methodology. Autobiographical texts are in this relation with others’ reading, learning, imitating, and even writing another autobiography. Therefore autobiographical text is not the same as the religious life centered on “the interest of the individual in his private personal destiny,” although religious narratives in the first person had been influenced by religious life.

The double aspect of autobiography concerns how “*documents humains*” were conceived as a literary source. James said, “We must make search rather for the original experiences which were the pattern-setters to all this mass of suggested feeling and imitated conduct.”⁵¹ He used autobiographical texts, but they were called as such. He collected the sources of religious experience, however most works he analysed “lie along the beaten highway.” In addition to accessibility for his readers who were not specialists in theology, these texts have been connected with the experiences of others.

4.3 Classification of Religious experience

James’ famous grouping of religious experience as “healthy-mindedness” and “sick-soul” is due to his vision on personal history. As he renounced to give the classification of the emotions as fixed expressions, James explained that one needed

⁴⁹ *VRE*, 397.

⁵⁰ *VRE*, 399.

⁵¹ *VRE*, 15.

to see religious life as what is rooted in sentiments from each individual idiosyncrasy. To follow one's personal history in written experiences is the way to understand them, and at the same time, to propose one of the ways to approach the experience of others. We take here some important examples representing two types of religious experience in order to see how James' view modified the plot of autobiography.

To begin his re-description, James referred to Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841)'s "apperceiving mass." He used this concept as a method to follow extraordinary religious experience by associating with what was already familiar to his readers. As we have mentioned previously by the study of Niebuhr, the *Varieties* largely follow the plot of the evangelical conversion narrative, and by guiding his argument in the broader view with this framework, he reexamines the religious moment in each case.

James argued more precisely on 'apperception' in his lecture series to teachers. We will see this concept following James' explication:

We *conceive* the impression in some definite way. We dispose of it according to our acquired possibilities, be they few or many, in the way of 'idea.' This way of taking in the object is the process of apperception. The conceptions which meet and assimilate it are called by Herbart the 'appereciving mass.' The apperceived impression is engulfed in this, and the result is a new field of consciousness, of which one part (and often a very small part) comes from the outer world, and another part (sometimes by far the largest) comes from the previous contents of mind.⁵²

This view on the conception as idea and at the same time as process focuses on the act of classing on the modifiability of the existing classification by the essentialist point of view. The work of classification inevitably reflects the subjectivity of the person who makes it. Considering the arbitrariness of the classification, James left a short note on classification as due to mind activity: "The mind *will* class; & the first

⁵² *TT*, 96.

classes formed are made for practical reasons (foods, Heilmittel,) Æsthetic reasons, (sunset or dawn vs. puddle, “types” in architecture, in character,) Both reasons combined (in the kinds of animals and plants we first single out) finally for reasons of orderly and perspicuous arrangement. But all these first formed classes are provisional.”⁵³ We could notice James’ mixed attitude combining the inneist and the perfectionist points of view we had seen regarding perception. As he had argued about the interest of mind, this mind interest engraves the world in a continuous nature.

On the other hand, James explains with help “the law of economy” in the process of acquiring a conception in confronting the new experience, which works in order to disturb the pre-existing ideas as little as possible. For “we hate anything *absolutely* new, anything without any name, and for which a new name must be forged. So we take a nearest name, even though it be inappropriate.”⁵⁴ The law of economy makes us able to establish new facts, and at the same time it says how difficult it is to accept new facts without the ones from previous experiences. How one came to have this or that conception is due to one’s personal history. This is the way he focuses on the personal history that leads to the moment one has a religious experience.

The continuity of “documents humains” is therefore at two levels: as personal history in each case, then as a classification of the sick-soul/healthy-mindedness that both lead to a conversion.

Firstly we see this second level. The sick-soul is characterised by its melancholic tendency due to the contradiction in the faith, the existence of the evil, or a sense of sin, and on the other hand, healthy-mindedness has a tendency to overcome such contradiction, and to be optimistic so as to believe good in everything. Though they are different type of temperaments of the individual person, they are not definitive, and James took extreme cases from both of them. The Sickness and Healthiness in religious life is not parallel to the Pathological and the Normal in medical discourse, but religious happiness could be experienced in both

⁵³ *MN*, 196.

⁵⁴ *TT*, 96.

of them. Psychological character influences the stability of emotional states, (there are difference in sensibility or intellect causes differences), but there are their essential nature of temperaments. It is rather their attitude to the world in their life, which is more meaningful to them.

James deals with both types of religious experience, defining conversion in general terms as follows: “to be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance, are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong inferior and un happy, becomes unified and consciously right superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities.”⁵⁵

The subject of conversion concerns the arguments on the movement that James launched, such as the instability of the brain and the change of consciousness due to the stream of thoughts: the displacement of what he called “*the habitual center of his personal energy*,” which is considered “the hot place in a man’s consciousness, the group of ideas to which he devotes himself, and from which he works.”⁵⁶ He described the sudden change due to augmenting the intensity on a thought; when it becomes a “hot and live” thought at a certain point, the thoughts, the ideas, and the feelings come to re-crystallise around it. James finds a cause of “ ‘motor efficacy,’ long deferred but now operative, of the idea,” which is due to the change of mechanical equilibrium.⁵⁷ With conversion, which happens as a religious experience and to which all the life of the believer is committed, James makes a synthetic description of conversion as he made on the stream of consciousness: habit, instinct, emotion, and the physiological brain function as “rearrangement” of mental structure. In this structure, religious thoughts are integrated then after the conversion when religious thoughts become “the varied world of concrete religious construction”⁵⁸ by the facts of the rearrangement. James considered that in this way religion entered in the history of natural life, then comes to have “*a natural constitution* different at some point from that which a materialistic world would

⁵⁵ VRE, 157.

⁵⁶ VRE, 162.

⁵⁷ VRE, 163.

⁵⁸ VRE, 397.

have.”⁵⁹

The concept of subconsciousness helped his argument on conversion, as a change of conscious states. Ann Taves points out, between 1886-1910 there was a decisive conceptual shift between psychology and religion following the early discovery of subconsciousness by Janet, Edmund Gurney, and Alfred Binet. Admitting Janet’s clinical research had the influence to make a “French-Swiss-English-and-American psycho-therapeutic alliance” as Eugene Taylor said, she also pointed out that Frederic Myers’ (a fellow member, like James, of the SPR) concept of subconsciousness had a central role in the psychological part of the *Varieties*.⁶⁰ Myers observed automatisms and took into consideration that there were messages coming up from the deeper strata of consciousness, which was then integrated into his “fully developed theory of self as the primary means of communication between the subliminal and supraliminal levels of consciousness.”⁶¹ James did not follow the concept of unconsciousness, which was not followed by the psychologist mentioned above. As he had proved his psychological hypothesis by neurophysiology, the terminology “unconscious” seemed to him simply a misnomer for “subconscious” or “subliminal.”⁶² At least, James had supposed subconsciousness that could not correspond to the states of consciousness found only in pathological cases, but rather was a more general condition. Then it was a baseline to explain religious experience not by the judgment of its ontological defection but by its spiritual value.

Using these arguments for the psychological explanation of the conversion, James introduced another class into both of them: “once-born,” those who can continue to rejoice in the experience and live in one’s belief, and “twice-born,” those who deeply lived the religious melancholia and rejoice in the redemption only by keeping the bitterness of life. The “once-born” type is compared with religion in ancient Greece: “the Greeks and Romans keep all their sadnesses and gladnesses

⁵⁹ *VRE*, 234.

⁶⁰ Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances & Vision: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 254-255.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁶² *VRE*, 170.

unmingled and entire... Good was good, and bad just bad, for the earlier Greeks.”⁶³ Walt Whitman is given as a representative of the healthy-mind, who affirmed “this integrity of the instinctive reactions, this freedom from all moral sophistry and strain.”⁶⁴ Due to his style in literature allowing “an expansive order” for not just man in the first-person but for all, James called him “a restorer of the eternal natural religion,” and a “pagan” by associating his straight affirmation to that of the Greeks as a “natural pagan.”⁶⁵ However, when James put Whitman’s healthy-mindedness in natural history, where the mind takes a part, his religion certainly was indebted to moral reactions of the ancients toward the merciless Nature and that of similar thinkers after them. The moral value found in the life of the finite human, and their moral effort, has affected nature including the mind: Stoic insensibility and Epicurean resignation modified the Greek mind to care about one’s soul and rescue it from the “dust-and-ashes” state of mind, seeking its integrity, and directed to “the evolution of the world-sick soul.” In this sense, Whitman’s religion appeared only after that philosophical period, and James understood his religious life as healthy-mindedness that had the twice-born character. James crossed the natural history of mind and the personal history of Whitman, then intertwined them to explain the type of influential religions.

On the other hand, in the religion of the sick soul, the world is not moving toward integration for unity, as healthy-mindedness rejoiced it under either the God or Whitman’s idea of the good. James described the universe of the sick-soul containing the pluralist notion:

[...] there being elements of the universe which may make no rational whole in conjunction with the other elements, and which, from the point of view of any system which those other elements make up, can only be considered so much irrelevance and accident—so much ‘dirt,’ as it were, and matter out of place.⁶⁶

⁶³ *VRE*, 78.

⁶⁴ *VRE*, 78.

⁶⁵ *VRE*, 76-77.

⁶⁶ *VRE*, 113-114.

This world does not allow us to see it as a whole in totality, but being irrelevant and accidentally emerged, part of it is forming and deforming. As far as we seek there the unity, these parts remain dirt. However, it is the world of experience, not rationalism. In this case, the experience of the re-born was in the personal history of those who confronted this uncoordinated world. James compared it with the religion of the “once-born” as a “one-storied affaire”; rejoicing in religious experience, it was allowed to live in religious happiness only on the plus side. On the other hand, in the religion of the “twice-born”, James understood that “the world is [a] double-storied mystery” for these types.⁶⁷ For their universe appears too incoherent and too scattered to keep one’s experience together for unity:

...how *can* things so insecure as the successful experiences of this world afford a stable anchorage? A chain is no stronger than its weakest link, and life is after all chain. In the healthiest and most prosperous existence, how many links of illness, danger, and disaster are always interposed? Unsuspected from the bottom of every fountain of pleasure, as the old poet said something bitter rise up: a touch of nausea, a falling dead of the delight, a whiff of melancholy, things that sound a knell, for fugitive as they may be, they bring a feeling of coming from a deeper region and often have an appalling convincingness. The buzz of life ceases at their touch as a piano-string stops sounding when the damper falls upon it. (VRE: 116)

While healthy mindedness is able to keep his vision of the mind stable, the sick-soul’s experience repeatedly confronts the disillusion and stays awake to the other parts of the universe in which he lives. Sicksoul’s life about the world is the plural world, individual’s life does not advance in a straight way as the healthy-minded’s does; the life of sick-soul is not only in the time axe—and as far as his/her life can be considered on the time line, his/her experiences become just tattered in the irrelevant world which James described above. At least James

⁶⁷ VRE, 139.

expressed their lives in “a universe two stories deep,”⁶⁸ co-existing but separated partly from the communication between two modes of their existence. He tried to remodel their lives with the concept of subconsciousness.

James advanced this point with his analysis on Leon Tolstoy, as a case of “double-stories” redemption. According to James, he experienced disillusion of the world with the idea of God and had too much sensibility for discordance, intellectually as well as emotionally. In such a case, James analysed, “there is seldom a *restitutio ad integrum*. One has tasted of the fruit of the tree, and the happiness of Eden never comes again. The happiness that comes, when any does come—and often enough it fails to return in an acute form, though its form is sometimes very acute—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 see it swallowed up in supernatural good.” James continues, “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*” [emphasis added]⁶⁹ It explains, according to James, being influenced by intellectual reflection, religious sentiment is to be expressed no more particularly than what is independent from one’s life. Tolstoy’s case was neither the dramatic conversion nor its vision for the integration of the divided self. James understands that Tolstoy chose heterogeneous life and rejected to simply realize the unity by ignoring his view on the evil, and also he realized it gradually.⁷⁰

John Bunyan was another case. James explained their complex religious life: “They had drunk too deeply of the cup of bitterness ever to forget its taste, and their redemption is into a universe two stories deep. Each of them realized a good which broke the effective edge of his sadness; yet the sadness was preserved as a minor ingredient in the heart of the faith by which it was overcome.”⁷¹ James remodeled

⁶⁸ *VRE*, 139.

⁶⁹ *VRE*, 131.

⁷⁰ To show different type of narrative for the mental recovery, James references to a pair of notion of bodily recovery in old medicine “crisis” and “lysis,” which means the sudden and gradual recovery respectively. *VRE*, 152-153.

⁷¹ *VRE*, 139.

their lives with the concept of subconsciousness, which explain the co-exsiting, multiple mind states. By explaining a possible redemption, James tied to find out the relation of between the twice-born types among both healthy-mindedness's religion and sick-souls' religion. In this process, James' own view on the universe appears as plural one as same as sick-souls' vision about the universe.

Then, James refocused on what he considered religion, which works inwardly in a person: "The fact of interest for us is that as a matter of fact they could and did find *something* welling up in the inner reaches of their consciousness, by which such extreme sadness could be overcome. Tolstoy does well to talk of it as that by which men live; for that is exactly what it is, a stimulus, an excitement, in full presence of the evil perception that erewhile made life seem unbearable."⁷²

Deeply colored by the individual's subjective life, the classification of religious experiences becomes no longer definitive such as the classification with essentialist viewpoint. With the double criteria for the personal temperature and the personal history of conversion, James' classification became to form more detailed apperceiving mass about religious experience. Classifying itself becomes also the way of describing the experiential world. The study of religious experiences allowed James to prove the experiential world is in forming and in transforming.

The model of evangelical conversion James seemed to follow became modified with experience and without absolute recovery, keeping in life the experiential world that never appeared in unity. In the sick-soul examples, James anonymously inserted his own episode, comparing it to Bunyan's strong fear experience.⁷³ James' strong fear was aroused by a hallucination of a horrible image of an epileptic with which he confounded himself enough to feel potentially that "*That shape am I.*"⁷⁴ He reports that this experience remained even after its immediate feeling disappeared. All of them seemed to happen inwardly by involving inward objects, despite the fact that the psychologist James inserted this episode in the *Varieties*, he might have tried to seek something which resulted from stimulating those feelings. According to him, "made him sympathetic with the

⁷² *VRE*, 155.

⁷³ *VRE*, 242.

⁷⁴ *VRE*, 134.

morbid feelings of others ever since.”⁷⁵ This sympathy had been aroused by not only this obsessive image, but also his continuous attention to the inward effect of this strong experience.

The classification is inseparable from the historicity of those who made it, but on the other hand, the being to be classified may insist upon their own way of organizing life. When one classifies experiences, their resources may be read differently, and the reader may seek another possibility of classification. In this sense, James’ reading on the human documents tells us how our personal history is to be integrated methodologically. From this view, in order to understand the important influence of religious believers to the others, James introduced the intertwined relation between sentimentality, intellect and action:

Strong affections need a strong will; strong active powers need a strong intellect; strong intellect needs strong sympathies, to keep life steady.⁷⁶

James’ argument was guided by a strong emotional component, but it also advocates moderation, an equilibrium made possible by the force of will. Like his argument on attention, the volitional act is only a part of will. The single act of volitional decision cannot change the world for a better one. However, a different kinds of will including the will that is physiologically embodied, one’s will may allow a gradual transformation of his/her world. As far as the classification is modifiable, the view of classification and that of history belongs to the world of alternative experience. Therefore, discrimination is a faculty of mind, that is to say, the cognitive power also enters into the moral discussion. James’ program of the science of religion in fact is supported his attention to the religious experience. However, re-experiencing the personal experiences in *documents humains* through the *Varieties*, James affirmed more clearly, even in the way of confession, how he was integrating himself into the world of experience, where religion is grafted too:

⁷⁵ *VRE*, 134.

⁷⁶ *VRE*, 272-273.

Disregarding the over-beliefs, and confining ourselves to what common and generic, we have in the fact that conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come, a positive content of religious experience which, it seems to me, is literally and objectively true as far as it goes. If I now proceed to state my own hypothesis about the farther limits of this extension of our personality, I shall be offering my own over-belief—though I know it will appear a sorry under-belief to some of you—for which I can only bespeak the same indulgence which in a converse case I should accord to yours.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ *VRE*, 405.

Conclusion

We started from the question regarding the difficulty of writing about one's experiences. William James had continued to do this through his incessant practice about expressing his own sentiments and thoughts both publicly and privately: in letters, paintings, observation in the field, eventual diaries and psychological experiments, and philosophical reflections. Though these activities belonged to his life, they continued to bring him to another place, as he said, "Experience is remoulding us every moment, and our mental reaction on every given thing is really a resultant of our experience of the whole world up to that date."¹ James' philosophy as a reformation of empiricism was brought about by the deep impact of Darwinian theory upon him. James might have lived in the two different ages that departed from the study of natural history; the impact of the evolutionism on psychology came with a delay. As a pioneer of experimental psychology in America, he lived with the transformation of psychology. Given his former experience with descriptive science, he understood that scientific knowledge is formed within the proper rationality of each discipline despite the objective attitude on the facts.

In Chapter 1 we have seen, following the work of Feinstein and Richardson, how James understood the ambiguity of observation and its asymmetrical relation; with the experience of the Civil war, he learned how the great cause (abolitionist) formed our attitude and broke human experiences in an unexpected way. In addition, his absence in that crisis, absence itself constituting his experience of the event, he understood that the experience of others indirectly came to touch him.

In Chapter 2, we focused on Alice James; as a sister of William and Henry James, she confronted how difficult it was to acquire her own self. Not only is it on

¹ *PP*, 228.

the one hand the shared experience in the patriarchal family of the Victorian era, her close family ties made ambiguous her individuality despite the required autonomy. In addition, if descriptive science continued to keep its regard as an observer, Alice, who suffered from hysteria as an ambiguous malaise on her nerves, had been scrutinised from the point view of medicine. On the other hand, despite the repressive character of the family, she deeply shared her thoughts with them, in which case Alice's diary expressively described it as her experience, however, only secretly. We found in her reflection on the self a resemblance with William's psychological concept. If James' psychology was supported by his experimental attitude, and his primitive ideas or imagination shared with intimate relations, how can we say that it has no roots in the family which created significant communication between its members? Alice tried to keep her individuality clear to her relationship with the self. Her struggle for her own story paradoxically implies that it may not be possible to have one's own autobiography. By this reason her diaries contains a moral significance as an effort for the impossible project.

In Chapter 3, on the contrary, we focused on the subjectivity of the scientist. Owing to the works of Daston and Galison, we followed the transformation of epistemic virtue in scientists: from the truth-to-nature to mechanical objectivity. In this process the meaning of objectivity is also transformed through the requirement of strict observation. The unity of nature sought in natural history, which had its root in the view of Natural Theology, contradicted with the experience of the scientists' self who continuously confronted the fragmented phenomena in nature. The observation on the mind suggested to British empiricists that the self may become dissociable. The unity of the self came to be questioned. James, with his instable mind, embarked upon a critique of the unity in the positivists' system. He came to consider the requirement of objectivity as a subjective desire of the scientist. His criticism of Spencer exemplified how and when the positivists consider the mind as a mirror of nature, the nature conceived also mirrored the subjectivity of its observer. He tried to conceive of the mind inside nature, and for this project Darwin's theory of natural selection had a great impact. James interpreted the double cycles of the mechanical character of production and the maintaining

process, and applied it experimentally to his concept of mind. With it the mind's continuity and discontinuity as its character became his concept of the stream of consciousness, instincts, and emotions. Conceived with the idea of the interest of the mind in the experimental attitude, these conceptions are verified as what is produced in the plurality, including the blindness of the mechanical process due to natural selection. Though the interest of the mind is understood in its connotation of James' moral interest in the volitional act, he focused on the Darwinian impact through the early Darwinist Wright. By the reception of Darwin's theory, the concept of attention, which implies its origin in that of interest, became deeply characterised by its passivity and derived from the brain's activity. With Richard's view on the development of James' psychology, and through James' engagement into research on the mental states, we attempted to see how the subjectivity of the scientist affects his investigation so as to discover a new fact, such as the independence of the mind in the case of James.

In Chapter 4, we tried to see the idea of self in a wider context than the psychological research. James' approach to the various mental phenomena after his masterful work *The Principles of Psychology* brought him to study a fuller meaning of human experience which included religious belief. The religious conversion narrative was exemplified as a state of unequilibrium in the mind; the brain as an instable organ caused a sudden change of conscious states. James considered these experiences in the crisis of the individual's life – they repeatedly transmitted and remoulded the original experience of religious genius. As religious experience is a highly subjective experience, despite its strong emotion, its cause is sometimes obscure to us. The concept of religion that divided the discussion (on whether religion is *sui generis* or not) is the matter that attains that inwardness. As individuality is rooted in sentimentality, the manner of religious experience is varied with individual idiosyncrasies. James focused on the moment of religious conversion that religious narrative had transmitted, and as a result, how the self becomes instable and accidentally changes (alongside the plot of conversion) to unity through the conversion.

The world viewed by the sick-soul who has an instable personal character type

contains dirt and fragments, but it is always in the process of transformation. Through the reexamination of autobiographical texts James attempted to describe his own experiences, providing an explanation for them, and as a result, how they transformed the self. James thought that the strong sentiment of religious genius, in extreme cases, may go further beyond the world's prudence, and become a creative power in society. James' focus on the religious moment sometimes is criticised for its decontextualisation of experience. However, following his program, individuality is the means that brings us to the world of experience. Since it is a critical moment in the life of the person, its creativity and the moral effort of the saintly person will reopen James' evolutionary vision at the level of society. In this sense, writing and reading autobiography may make the experience of individuals continuous. James employed his psychology to understand religious experience. The methodology for the use of autobiography was the result of the encountering between the epistemology he had developed with pragmatism, and the use of pragmatism which was employed to interpret the religious truth. In this sense, the reading and writing of autobiography obtains its ethical aspect.

Autobiography is an act anchored in social context. The deeper reach of James's radical empiricism would be understood with the age he lived. His philosophy of radical empiricism and pluralism, to and for which the *Varieties of Religious Experience* is envisaged, was the period he decisively engaged to social criticism as an anti-imperialist in the time America moved forward its expansionism. In this thesis I couldn't argue this aspect. However, we may understand better when he said as follow in the end of *The Will to Believe* : "No one of us ought to issue vetoes to the other, nor should we bandy words of abuse. We ought, on the contrary, delicately and profoundly to respect one another's mental freedom—then only shall we bring about the intellectual republic; then only when shall we have that spirit of inner tolerance without which all our outer tolerance is soulless, and which is empiricism's glory; then only shall we live and let live, in speculative as well as in practical things."²

² *WTB*, 33.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the text and notes (see Select Bibliography, for complete bibliographic information):

James' Family Name:

AHJ	Alice Howe Gibbens James (1849-1922): wife of William James
AJ	Alice James (1848-92): sister
GWJ	Garth Wilkinson James (1845-83): brother Wilky
HJ	Henry James (1843-1916): brother
HJ Sr.	Henry James, Sr. (1811-82): father
MWJ	Mary Robertson Walsh James (1810-82): mother
RJ	Robertson James (1846-1910): brother Bob
WJ	William James (1842-1910)

Texts of William James:

BC	<i>Psychology: The Briefer Course.</i>
Corr. I-XII	<i>The correspondence of William James, vol.1-12.</i>
ECR	<i>Essays, Comments, and Reviews.</i>
EPH	<i>Essays in Philosophy.</i>
EPR	<i>Essays in Psychical Research.</i>
EPS	<i>Essays in Psychology.</i>
ERE	<i>Essays in Radical Empiricism.</i>
EREfr	<i>Essais d'Empirisme Radical (trad.fr).</i>
ERM	<i>Essays in Religion and Morality.</i>
ML	<i>Manuscript lectures.</i>
MN	<i>Manuscript Essays and Notes.</i>
MT	<i>The Meaning of Truth.</i>
P	<i>Pragmatism.</i>
Pfr	<i>Pragmatisme (trad.fr).</i>
PP	<i>The Principle of Psychology Vol. I, II, III.</i>
Precis	<i>Précis de Psychologie (trad. fr).</i>
PU	<i>A Pluralistic Universe.</i>
SPP	<i>Some Problems of Philosophy.</i>
TT	<i>Talks to Teachers on Psychology and to Students on Some of Life's ideals.</i>

WB	<i>The Will to Believe.</i>
VC	<i>La Volonté de Croire</i> (trad. fr).
VRE	<i>The Varieties of Religious Experience.</i>

Biography and Texts of James Family:

WJB	Allen, Gay Wilson. <i>William James: a Biography.</i>
BWJ	Feinstein, Howard M. <i>Becoming William James.</i>
The Diary	James, Alice. <i>The Diary of Alice James.</i>
The Letters	James, Alice. <i>The Death and Letters of Alice James: Selected Correspondence.</i>
SBO	James, Henry. <i>A Small Boy and Others</i> in <i>Autobiography.</i>
NSB	James, Henry. <i>Notes of a Son and Brother</i> in <i>Autobiography.</i>
BEWJ	Machado, Maria Helena Pereira Toledo. <i>Brazil through the Eyes of William James: Diaries, Letters, and Drawings, 1865-1866.</i>
TCWJI•II	Perry, Ralph Barton. <i>The Thought and Character of William James.</i>
WJMA	Richardson, Robert D. <i>William James: In the Maelstrom of American Modernism.</i>

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