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### James's Pragmatism: The Possibility For Meaning

Virginia Bergin Cravens

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MASTER OF ARTS

JAMES'S PRAGMATISM:

THE POSSIBILITY FOR MEANING

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JAMES'S PRAGMATISM:  
THE POSSIBILITY FOR MEANING

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THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
MASTER of ARTS in PHILOSOPHY  
in the Graduate School of  
The University of New Mexico  
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May, 1976

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

The problem of this study was to determine if William James's philosophy of Pragmatism offers the possibility for discovering meaning in life for the person who unexplainably suffers depression and melancholia, and a religious explanation for the evolutionary scientific person who suffers a religious-scientific crisis.

The methods used were to examine William James's lectures, letters, and books, and research the literature for his interpretation of Pragmatism as a philosophy. The procedure analyzed the possibilities James offered for finding meaning in life, with or without religion, by using the Pragmatic Theory of Truth. This involved a consideration of James's belief that to think was to act so that an idea became a plan of action having meaning, and his empirical method based on the concrete way of seeing resulting in experiential evidence.

The results of the inquiry are that James's Pragmatism, using the Pragmatic Theory of Truth as method, is based on free will, tychism, pluralism, and belief in a finite God which offers promise to the individual in a future oriented world. According to James, repletion and abundance may be responsible for unexplainable depression and melancholia, and for this condition he offers the Humanist option of working for an unhabitual ideal, and belief in a doctrine of meliorism.

As a psychologist and philosopher, James posits a marginal, subliminal consciousness that is the higher part of consciousness which he terms the MORE. For the evolutionary scientific person with religious feelings, this higher part of consciousness, or the MORE, offers the possibility for a religious option with mediation between science and religion resulting in a science of religions.

The conclusion of the study is that James's Pragmatism is a philosophy that offers the possibility for finding meaning in life for the person suffering unexplainable depression and melancholia, and the evolutionary scientific person with need for a religious explanation by using the Pragmatic Theory of Truth as method.

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## CHAPTER I

"...our hour of triumph is what brings the void."<sup>1</sup>

"Why not step out into the green darkness?"<sup>2</sup>

"I have been a prey for such disgust for life..."<sup>3</sup>

William James

### THE PROBLEM

..... It is the purpose of this study to determine if William James's philosophy of Pragmatism offers the possibility for discovering meaning in life. James, America's foremost seminal thinker in philosophy, was the apostle of the pragmatic method. Knowing a person's need for finding meaning in life when suffering from depression and melancholia, and the need of some evolutionary scientific persons for religious explanation, James posits a pragmatic Theory of Truth that offers the pragmatic method for discovering meaning and explanation.

The problem is caused by the inexplicable, inner despair that may come to a person when the outer world is in good order. When this feeling of futility or morbid depression arrives when material and professional successes are assured,

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<sup>1</sup>William James, The Will to Believe (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), p. 47.

<sup>2</sup>Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1936), p. 287.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 320.

it has no explanation. Meaninglessness may be the result of historical events beyond the scope of the individual's power to control, may come from psychological or philosophical conflict, or spiritual emptiness. Their commonality is that life is no longer worth living for those persons suffering this despair.

In the twentieth century, when science offered new explanations for a person's existence, James believed that he had an obligation to mediate scientific and religious conflict by finding a philosophical truth acceptable to both. When scientific facts caused the end of belief in a personal God for many persons, James offered a Pragmatic Theory of Truth by which a person could find meaning and purpose with or without religion.

Because the arguments and evidence for psychological and religious relief from morbid depression are so persuasive, they need to be examined for their value in relation to the problem before delimiting them as solutions. James's personal experience, and the pragmatic philosophy that evolved will then be offered as a possibility for meaning for the person to whom psychology is a short term expedient, the results of which may collapse if, because of circumstances beyond one's control, the goal is removed; and for those persons who have no religious experiences.

Before considering James's mental conflict and suicidal thoughts, the experiences of the lack of life's meaning

afflicting Viktor E. Frankl, relieved by psychology; and Tolstoy, relieved by religious conversion, will be taken into account. The fortuitous outcome for them is not possible for all persons, hence the inquiry will offer James's pragmatism for a philosophical solution.

An historical cause of depression, such as war, may be assuaged psychologically as evidenced by Viktor E. Frankl, who survived the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Dachau. Frankl, who was to live to become president of the Austrian Medical Society for Psychotherapy, found a meaning for his life and the will to live by creating future goals. His inspiration came from Nietzsche's words, "He who has a WHY to live for can bear with almost any HOW."<sup>4</sup>

The WHY of "Why do you not commit suicide?" is Dr. Frankl's answer to lead his patient to discover his own reason for finding meaning. In this method of existential analysis it is possible to find a latent goal that was forgotten in the time of despair. In the concentration camps it was often a loved one or meaningful work unfinished that was the WHY of continued effort and sense of responsibility in existence. In his psychiatric practice at the University of Vienna Dr. Frankl gave this premise to his patients in their darkest extremity that in suffering there is meaning. Gordon W. Allport, professor of psychology at Harvard

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<sup>4</sup>Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), p. xiii.

University, points out Frankl's use of

... The central theme of existentialism: to live is to suffer, to survive is to find meaning in the suffering. If there is a purpose in life at all, there must be a purpose in suffering and in dying. But no man can tell another what this purpose is. Each man must find out for himself, and must accept the responsibility that his answer prescribes.<sup>5</sup>

Frankl's answer for the will to live in the concentration camps was his existential thesis: "... everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."<sup>6</sup>

The truth of Frankl's thesis is irrefutable but the sick soul cries, "Is this all?" When a person lives on the hope of future goals, he finds change to be the enemy. Loved ones find others or die; unfinished work becomes untimely. In James's philosophy change is recognized as an evolutionary truth to be accepted.

In The Varieties of Religious Experience James explains the plight of the sick soul, telling of the melancholia of Tolstoy before his religious solution. Tolstoy began to feel as if he did not know how to live. He found no answer to the 'Why?', 'What for?' in his life. James uses Tolstoy's

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<sup>5</sup>Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search For Meaning (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), p. xiii.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

experience as the classic example of those who find meaning through religious conversion.

'I felt,' says Tolstoy, 'that something had broken within me on which my life had always rested, that I had nothing left to hold on to, and that morally my life had stopped. An invincible force impelled me to get rid of my existence, in one way or another. It cannot be said that I wished to KILL myself, for the force which drew me away from life was fuller, more powerful, more general than any mere desire. It was a force like my old aspiration to live, only it impelled me in the opposite direction. It was an aspiration of my whole being to get out of life.

... All this took place at a time when so far as all my outer circumstances went, I ought to have been completely happy. I had a good wife who loved me and whom I loved; good children and a large property... I was loaded with praise by strangers; and without exaggeration I could believe my name already famous. ... I possessed a physical and mental strength which I have rarely met in persons of my age.

And yet I could give no reasonable meaning to any actions of my life. ... Why should I live? Why should I do anything?

These questions are the simplest in the world. ... they are in the soul of every human being. Without an answer to them, it is impossible, as I experienced, for life to go on.

... It is not possible that this condition of despair should be natural to mankind. And I sought for an explanation in all the branches of knowledge acquired by men. ... I sought like a man who is lost and seeks to save himself, - and I found nothing. I became convinced, moreover, that all those who before me had sought for an answer in the sciences have also found nothing. And not only this, but that they have recognized that the very thing which was leading me to despair - the meaningless absurdity of life - is the only, incontestible knowledge accessible to man.'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), pp. 153-55.

James's involvement in Tolstoy's experience is concern that a person such as Tolstoy with ostensibly all the goodness of life - love, family, work and fame could be so destroyed inwardly by a loss of the sense for human values. Tolstoy's release from pain came as he experienced "... a thirst for God. This craving for God,"<sup>8</sup> which does not come to all men in their human condition. James explains that happiness is experienced rarely again from this state. The fortunate persons are the beneficiaries of the process of redemption emanating from a supernatural good.

James's personal experience of morbid depression would never have been exposed except for the work of his brother, Henry James, who is regarded as one of the great writers of the western world. The life-long interest of the brothers for each other's health and professional work caused Henry James to be aware of James's anguish. Consideration of a person's relation to the Universe became such a question of personal concern to William James that he was plunged into the morbid depression. The meaninglessness of existence if a person is impotent in the Universe oppressed him almost to the point of paralysis of his mental functions, but James never disclosed the true extent of his despondency.

Thirty years later he wrote of a fictitious sick soul in The Varieties of Religious Experience. Henry James

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<sup>8</sup>William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), pp. 153-55.

writes that his brother admitted to M. Abauzit that the anonymous French correspondent was in truth William James. Henry James in The Letters of William James says this account is the authentic statement of James's experience.

Whilst in this state of philosophic pessimism and general depression of spirits about my prospects, I went one evening into a dressing-room in the twilight, to procure some article that was there; when suddenly there fell upon me without any warning, just as if it came out of the darkness, a horrible fear of my own existence. Simultaneously, there arose in my mind the image of an epileptic patient whom I had seen in the asylum, a black-haired youth with greenish skin, entirely idiotic, who used to sit all day on one of the benches, or rather shelves, against the wall, with his knees drawn up against his chin, and the coarse gray undershirt, which was his only garment, drawn over them, inclosing his entire figure. He sat there like a sort of sculptured Egyptian cat or Peruvian mummy, moving nothing but his black eyes and looking absolutely non-human. This image and my fear entered into a species of combination with each other, THAT SHAPE AM I, I felt, potentially. Nothing that I possess can defend me against that fate, if the hour for it should strike for me as it struck for him. There was such a horror of him, and such a perception of my own merely momentary discrepancy from him, that it was as if something hitherto solid within my breast gave way entirely, and I became a mass of quivering fear. After this the universe was changed for me altogether. I awoke morning after morning with a horrible dread at the pit of my stomach, and with a sense of the insecurity of life... for months I was unable to go out into the dark alone.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), pp. 160-1.

The psychological and religious solutions of Frankl and Tolstoy for finding meaning in life would not have worked to relieve the melancholia of James. For his needs they would have been limited. His intellectual scientific conscience could not accept religion without doubt, and his religious stirrings gave him the personal need to go beyond science.

The purpose of including Frankl's experience in this study is to recognize the validity of the following argument. Would James's pragmatism have worked to find a possibility for meaning had he postulated this philosophy after the phenomena of two world wars? Frankl had to find an answer to despair in an horrendous situation that James did not experience. James created his philosophy in the period of historical calm of the late nineteenth and early 20th century. It is a purpose of this study to show that James's philosophical beliefs offered a better answer whatever the human situation. Frankl's psychological solution for finding meaning by looking forward to an immediate goal, dependent on external causes, could in fact increase future despair rather than diminish it. To find meaning in the acceptance of suffering was alien to James's philosophical position of meliorism toward good and evil, and to his philosophical temperament which was adventurous working toward a positive future.

The purpose of including the crisis experience of Tolstoy in this study is to remove its solution as an



alternative religious solution for James. Because James was a scientific empiricist, who never experienced a religious revelation, Tolstoy's answer was limited for James. He was searching for a philosophy to live by that would reconcile science and religion, using scientific methods with the hypothesis that religion could be a possible result. Morally he needed to believe that good and evil could co-exist.

At the time of his personal crisis of morbid depression, James wanted freedom to believe in moral will, but was trapped by determinism. He wrote, "That we are Nature through and through, that we are wholly conditioned, that not a wiggle of our will happens save as the result of physical laws."<sup>10</sup>

His conflict was that he needed to find the insight that would offer him freedom to believe that a person has free will to find his own truth. From the condition of "the ebbing of the will to live, for lack of a philosophy to live by - a paralysis of action occasioned by a sense of moral impotence,"<sup>11</sup> James went on to discover the insight leading to his belief in free will and to be the apostle of pragmatism, an evolutionary philosophy offering each person the possibility for finding his meaning.

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<sup>10</sup> Henry James, The Letters of William James (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1920), Vol. I, pp. 152-3.

<sup>11</sup> Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1936), p. 322.

## CHAPTER II

### INFLUENCES ON WILLIAM JAMES

"My first act of free will shall be to  
believe in free will."<sup>1</sup>

William James

It will be the purpose of this section of the study  
to consider the influences on James that led to the crisis  
of moral impotence, and the philosophical solution  
justifying freedom of will that he discovered in the  
thought of the French philosopher, Charles Renouvier.

James's early background was rich in intellectual  
influences and did not evidence the philosophical conflict  
between scientific determinism, religious monism, and moral  
will that was to agitate him beginning in 1860. Concord  
and Cambridge provided the roots that nourished James's  
thought. Nurtured in an atmosphere of the intellectual  
community where high value was placed on thought and dis-  
cussion, and the worth of the individual was a positive  
good, James breathed a fresh philosophical air.

New England Transcendentalism, espoused by the friends  
of his father, Henry James, Sr., became a part of William  
James's intellectual heritage. Henry Commager writes

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<sup>1</sup>Henry James, The Letters of William James  
(Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1920), I, p. 147.

"... he never entirely freed his mind from its rich optimism, its faith in the spiritual resources of man, its hospitality to individual inspiration, its confidence that men could validate intuitive truths by effective action."<sup>2</sup>

It is noteworthy that Henry James, Sr., a few days after the birth of William James, arranged that his first born son receive the personal blessing of Ralph Waldo Emerson. The heritage of the romantic humanitarians of Concord was a part of James's life, but he was of the next empirical generation. Henry James, Sr. was an unorthodox thinker caught between the time periods of adherence to dogmatic theism and the rise of scientific questioning. He offered a tolerant attitude, the freedom to think, and to experiment to his son without forcing his religious convictions on him.

James respected the character of his father and his examples of religious scepticism and doubt. He was proud of the moral strength of the father who found his truth in rejecting selfhood. He wrote of him

"... for he was a religious prophet and genius, if ever prophet and genius there were. He published an intensely positive, radical, and fresh conception of God, and an intensely vital view of our connection with him."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Henry Commager, The American Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 91.

<sup>3</sup>William James (ed.), The Literary Remains of Henry James (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1885), p. 12.

The early education of William James, both in America and Europe, was informal and spasmodic. Because of a fortunate investment in the Erie Canal on the part of William James's grandfather, Henry James, Sr. could invest his energies in scholarship and restless travelling. William James and his brother, Henry, were in and out of schools in New York, Boulogne, Geneva, Berlin, Rome, Paris, and London. James was to state later that he never had any education at all. The ability of observation, and the need to experiment with instruments, were native to him and would contribute to his later interest in natural science and empiricism.

William and Henry, as young children, roamed the streets of New York, as they were later to wander about the streets of European capitals observing for lack of other recreation. William James began to sketch what he saw, to measure, and develop a scientific attitude. His facility with foreign languages was to enable him later to maintain dialogs with his philosophical contemporaries in Europe. From sketching as a youth, James's interest in painting became so strong he considered it as a professional career. After returning to New York and formal art lessons, his self-evaluation was that his talent was only that of a passable painter, but his life-long aesthetic appreciation of art was to afford James solace during his periods of physiological weakness and mental depression.

Still searching for a career, James turned to science and entered the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard in 1861 to study under Jeffries Wyman and Louis Agassiz in the department of anatomy and physiology. The thrust of the field of biological science at Harvard was evolutionary. James credited Wyman, a field naturalist and experimentalist, with his first interest in evolution which was to be basic to his philosophical conflict. Wyman, accurate, thorough, and admired for the purity of his scientific research was considered by James to be a scientific paragon. Later Wyman was to be a source for James's teaching. James's construction of a modern biological interpretation of mind stemmed from this scientific education.

James, attempting to find a career compatible both with his interests and periodic poor health, entered Harvard Medical School intending to become a physiologist. As an assistant on the Thayer Expedition to Brazil in 1865, James spent nine months working with the naturalist, Louis Agassiz. Empirical facts were more important to Agassiz than abstractions so that James evaluated him in 1896

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 fulness, that I have never been able to forget it.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>William James, Memories and Studies (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), p. 14.

James admired Agassiz for the stimulation he gave his students toward a life work in biology but recognized his own temperament as impatient and impulsive, precluding further interest in scientific collecting.

The third scientist to contribute to James's thought was Charles Darwin who now opposed biology to the metaphysical and supernatural with his definitive revolutionary belief in the natural origin of new species of plants and animals. Influenced by the Darwinian theory of evolution, James posited that the world is as it is because each part has a function which has survived for use whether for good or evil. The fact that one has religious feelings means that these feelings too have a reason or purpose for being. William James found himself an evolutionary naturalist concerned with ultimate problems.

Together with the effort to reconcile science and religion came a mental depression and diminished physical well-being. A hint of what James was searching for is shown in a letter to his friend, Tom Ward, written in Boston, 1866.

... I began the other day to read the thoughts of Marcus Aurelius... and it seems to me that any man who can, like him, grasp the love of a "life according to nature," i.e., a life in which your individual will becomes so harmonized to nature's will as cheerfully to acquiesce in whatever she assigns to you, knowing that you serve SOME purpose in her vast machinery which will never be re-

vealed to you - any man who can do this will, I say, be a pleasing spectacle, no matter what his lot in life...<sup>5</sup>

Health problems, multiple in nature and often occurring simultaneously, as well as a mental depression again plagued James. Too ill to continue his medical studies and worried about his professional future, he returned to Europe in April, 1867 to attempt to work out his philosophical conflicts. His growing melancholia is best understood from his letters reflecting his despair before the morbid depression crisis.

In a letter to his sister from Dresden, March 16, 1869, he writes "... this winter seems one of the emptiest years of my life,..."<sup>6</sup>

To his friend, Tom Ward, from Dresden, May 24, 1868,

... for the last two months my mind has been off the tolerably steady mechanical track in which I had succeeded in keeping it in Berlin. Consequence: dissatisfaction and general listlessness and scepticism...<sup>7</sup>

To his parents from Berlin, July 3, 1868 "The fact is I have been to Heidleberg and fled again under the influence of a blue despair which seized me for a week."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1936), p. 231,

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 266.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 276.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p. 282.

In a letter from Divonne to his father October 5, 1868, James mentioned his interest in the style of writing of Charles Bernard Renouvier from his reading of Renouvier's Introduction to the first volume of Pillon's L'ANNEE PHILOSOPHIQUE, not knowing that this chance reading would foretell the insight that would affirm his belief in free will and lead him to a philosophical solution of his crisis.

Reading deeper into Renouvier's philosophy, James found in his DEUXIEME ESSAI, the doctrine of freedom that was the justification for James's belief in free will. This discovery restored his mental health and intellectual vitality. The April 30, 1870 entry in his diary is

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. ... My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will. ... I may perhaps return to metaphysical study and skepticism without danger to my powers of action. ... Hitherto, when I have felt like taking a free initiative, like daring to act originally, without carefully waiting for contemplation of the external world to determine all for me, suicide seemed the most manly form to put my daring into; now, I will go a step further with my will, not only act with it, but believe as well; believe in my individual reality and creative power.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Henry James, The Letters of William James (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1920), Vol. I, pp. 147-8.



Because Renouvier is considered "the greatest individual influence upon the development of James's thought,"<sup>10</sup> and "the friendship of these two great thinkers a significant episode in the history of modern European thought"<sup>11</sup> it is necessary to consider in this study the philosophy of Renouvier which relates to James's thought. Renouvier, like James, attempted to reconcile his intellectual conscience with his moral and religious feelings.

Renouvier was an empiricist, tychist, and a pluralist. In his system reality, being, and meaning all stem from experience. His categories, which he derived mathematically, included chance and personality. As a tychist, he was freed from determinism by the doctrine that there is real chance in the world. Perry explains how Renouvier defended voluntary belief in his DEUXIEME ESSAI.

It defends voluntary belief-believing what one wills. But is it psychologically possible that will should induce belief? Renouvier's answer is that this is the one and only thing that WILL can induce. The will cannot act directly on the body, but applies itself, in the form of attention, to ideas; and when an idea is thus dwelt upon, and survives to the exclusion of others, it straightway expresses itself in appropriate action. This is that doctrine of will which James said he owed to Renouvier.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1936), p. 655.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, p. 655.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, pp. 657-8.

James and Renouvier, both pluralists, agreed that unity should not predetermine the many. Renouvier's argument that the world may compose a whole without being determined by it was judged by James to be the core of empiricism. James acknowledged his debt and gratitude to Renouvier in the dedication of Some Problems of Philosophy which he wrote shortly before his death.

He (Charles Renouvier) was one of the greatest of philosophic characters, and but for the decisive impression made on me in the seventies by his masterly advocacy of pluralism, I might never have got free from the monistic superstition under which I had grown up. The present volume, in short, might never have been written. This is why, feeling endlessly thankful as I do, I dedicate this textbook to the great Renouvier's memory.<sup>13</sup>

Renouvier also had prophetic powers for James, writing from La Verdette, near Avignon, September 5, 1882,

"It seems to me when I read you that you are called to found an AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY."<sup>14</sup>

Free from beliefs in determinism and monism, James could work out a pragmatic philosophy, original and evolutionary with a Theory of Meaning that would work to satisfy each person's unique needs.

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<sup>13</sup>Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1936), p. 655.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid, p. 679.

### CHAPTER III

"The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief..."<sup>1</sup>

William James

#### DISTINCTIONS IN PRAGMATISM AND JAMES'S THEORY OF TRUTH AS METHOD

The purposes of this section of the study are to consider some distinctions in Pragmatism as a philosophy made by the three leading American exponents, Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey; and to examine James's Theory of Truth as a method for resolving philosophical conflict. In the consideration of Pragmatism as a philosophy for finding meaning in life, the thought of Peirce, James, and Dewey and its diversity is significant in understanding the pragmatic position. Their commonality is that each accepted the characteristics of Pragmatism as recognizing no a priori truths, and that the empiricist attitude and experience are necessary to find pragmatic truth.

While influenced by British empiricism, John Dewey explained the different view of empiricism held by pragmatic empiricists, "British empiricism was retrospective, concerned with antecedent phenomena, whereas pragmatic empiricism

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<sup>1</sup>William James, Pragmatism And Other Essays (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1963), p. 36.

looks at the consequent phenomena: upon possibilities of action rather than for precedents."<sup>1</sup> James's empiricism was eschatological, "looking away from first things, principles, categories, and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts."<sup>2</sup>

Beginning with an evolutionary concept and recognizing the Universe as unfinished, rather than static, Pragmatism is a predictive philosophy working progressively toward the solution of immediate and future problems. Peirce, James, and Dewey shared the belief that a concept was defined by the behavior it elicited, as well as the connection between the thought of an individual and what he desired the outcome of that thought to be. James believed concepts were tools to be used for the purpose of action, and Dewey, similarly, considered concepts as a set of operations for a plan of action.

Peirce is credited by James with having conceived the term "pragmatism." Peirce and James had helped found the "Metaphysical Club" in Cambridge, which numbered among its members Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Fisk, and Chauncey Wright. As a result of the philosophical discussions of this Cambridge club, Peirce published an essay titled, "How To Make Our Ideas Clear," in the January, 1878 issue of

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<sup>1</sup>Walter G. Muelder, Laurence Sears, Anne V. Schlabach, The Development of American Philosophy (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), p. 343.

<sup>2</sup>William James, Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1907), pp. 54-5.

"Popular Science Monthly." Peirce interpreted the ideas that came from the discussions as pragmatic philosophy and stated these beliefs in the essay as "Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object."<sup>4</sup> Peirce posited that concepts are a means for living and experiencing in the world and can only have meaning through action.

James wrote of the essay

It lay entirely unnoticed by any one for twenty years, until I, in an address before Professor Howison's philosophical union at the [University] of California, brought it forward again and made a special application of it to religion. By that date (1898) the times seemed ripe for its reception. ... The word 'pragmatism' spread, ... On all hands we find the 'pragmatic movement' spoken of, ...seldom with clear understanding.<sup>5</sup>

Peirce did not agree with the statements of James in the address when James said

...the effective meaning of any philosophic proposition can always be brought down to some particular consequence, in our future practical experience, whether active or passive; the point lying rather in the fact that the

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<sup>4</sup>Walter G. Muelder, Laurence Sears, Anne V. Schlabach, The Development of American Philosophy (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), p. 344.

<sup>5</sup>William James, Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1907), p. 47

experience must be particular, than in the fact that it must be active.<sup>6</sup>

James was pointed here toward his idea of practical consequences, and the divergence of interpretation had begun as Peirce rejected James's pragmatic thought to the extent that by 1905 he had changed the name of his own philosophy to Pragmatism. The similarity of James's thought to that of Peirce as to method is evidence of his debt to Peirce.

James stated

Test every concept by the question: 'What sensible difference to anybody will its truth make?' If, questioning whether a certain concept be true or false, you can think of absolutely nothing that would practically differ in two cases you may assume that the alternative is meaningless, and that your concept is no distinct idea.

The contribution of James to John Dewey was the belief in the importance of man in the biological process. Dewey recognized the significance of James's biological emphasis with the statement, "It was reserved for William James to think of life in terms of action."<sup>8</sup> For Dewey thought and knowledge were forms of action in the everyday world. Because life was uncertain, thinking was the means for increased control and security for the person. The method of knowledge was empirical seeking results.

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<sup>6</sup>Walter G. Muelder, Laurence Sears, Anne V. Schlabach, The Development of American Philosophy, (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), p. 344.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 345.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p. 346.

Dewey came to view man as a biological adaptation with the spiritual an aspect of behaviorism or adaptation, while the spiritual was a live hypothesis for James. Dewey valued James's idea of mind as being "more like an antenna which gropes about, it is an instrument for biological adaptation. We learn actively and not passively. The mind puts questions, experience answers them; mind proposes, the environment disposes."<sup>9</sup>

Dewey's pragmatic theory was called instrumentalism, and the pregnant question he sought to answer was "whether knowledge is to be considered as a disclosure of a reality which is prior to and independent of knowing, or whether it is to be regarded as being invariably related to human purpose for the control of experienced objects."<sup>10</sup> His Theory of Instrumentalism was not complicated by satisfaction and recognized only consequences. For Dewey the truth of a proposition was if it worked and not if it were congenial or satisfactory, while for James a true proposition worked if it led to satisfaction. Dewey offered a method by which individuals in a society could recognize problems and work out their solutions for human progress, but his emphasis was biological and sociological excluding religious possibilities.

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<sup>9</sup>Walter G. Muelder, Laurence Sears, Anne V. Schlabach, The Development of American Philosophy (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), p. 345.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, p. 346.

James offered a possibility for meaning in the individual's life that would include his spiritual feelings, inner experience, and emotional satisfaction as parts of his being. By not excluding the religious hypothesis, James gave the person the right to believe what would best fulfil his need.

Because of personal need James attempted to reconcile evolutionary science with moral will and religion. Freed from determinism by Renouvier's insight justifying the right to sustain his own thoughts, James began to construct a pragmatic philosophy as he conceived it. In Pragmatism, he explained what free will meant to him.

Free-will pragmatically means NOVELTIES IN THE WORLD, the right to expect that in its deepest elements, as well as in its surface phenomena, the future may not identically repeat and imitate the past. That imitation EN MASSE is there, who can deny? The general 'uniformity of nature' is presupposed by every lesser law. But nature may be only approximately uniform; and persons in whom knowledge of the world's past has bred pessimism (or doubts as to the world's good character, which become certainties if that character be supposed eternally fixed) may naturally welcome free-will as a MELIORISTIC doctrine. It holds up improvement as at least possible; whereas determinism assures us that our whole notion of possibility is born of human ignorance, and that necessity and impossibility between them rule the destinies of the world. <sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>William James, Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1907), pp. 118-9.



James's use of "novelties in the world" is not what people have generally meant by "free will", but rather an ontological view that assumes some form of chance or indeterminism. When James called this free will, he was making a radical shift of language. James believed that for many persons free will was a rationalistic principle. These people felt an instinctive belief in free will and thought by holding this belief they were given dignity and virtue, whereas determinism diminished their importance as individuals to the world. Not to believe in free will meant the loss of the creative principle offered by free will.

To James free will meant a general cosmological theory of PROMISE. The words free will, Spirit, Absolute, God, or design have no meaning in themselves viewed abstractly, and only take on meaning pragmatically when they are used over against an imperfect world. They offer promise of change and a hope for security. For this reason James counted free will among the religious doctrines offering promise as he said, "Our spirit, shut within this courtyard of sense-experience, is always saying to the intellect upon the tower: 'Watchman, tell us of the night, if it aught of promise bear,' and the intellect gives it then these terms of promise."<sup>12</sup>

Novel effects, the idea that nature is not uniform, and James's background of biological naturalism gave him sufficient

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<sup>12</sup>William James, Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (New York: Longmans, Green and Company,

1907), p. 121

reason to believe in an unfinished Universe. In an evolutionary Universe existing realities may be changed by free will. The significance of free will to James was chance and indeterminism making its meaning a pragmatic promise.

The reasons James offered for his belief in chance were stated in an address which he gave to the Harvard divinity students and later published as an essay "The Dilemma of Determinism" in the "Unitarian Review" in September, 1884. First, he held that chance was indeterminism and like free will meant novelties in the world and offered unlimited possibilities.

James argued for the use of the word chance rather than freedom because he believed what things are free should be truly free, not subject to any control, whereas chance means the possibility for things to be subject to impotence or negativity. He recognized that as a moralist and pluralist chance in the Universe was necessary to his beliefs. He rationalized this position by asserting, "If a certain formula for expressing the nature of the world violates my moral demand, I shall feel as free to throw it overboard, or at least to doubt it, as if it disappointed my demand for uniformity of sequence."<sup>13</sup> Determinism had been carried to the extreme of dogma by its adherents, he maintained, removing the opportunity for chance possibilities that he considered necessary to cause existence to have meaning.

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<sup>13</sup>William James, The Will To Believe (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), p. 147.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to debate the differences of determinism and indeterminism, but to show that because James believed in indeterminism from his resolution of the free will problem discussed in Chapter II, and because he equated indeterminism and chance his views on chance offered those suffering melancholia a fresh start in life. No guarantee came in the Universe but, in turn, a person was not foredoomed to despair. In support of this thesis, it is important to recognize that because chance is fundamental to James's Pragmatism, the person suffering melancholia will be freed from the burden of a determined cause that will make the future repeat the past. James considered chance the promise, or gift of life, which pertinent to this particular thesis, means the possibility for finding explanation and meaning in life.

Moreover, James reasoned that evolution meant that relations were connected by chance, and spontaneously, rather than by a determined pattern. As a pluralist, he contended relations were made by connections and counter-connections on chance possibilities. He argued that "chance means only the negative fact that no part of the world, however big, can claim to control absolutely the destinies of the whole."<sup>14</sup> He charged his opponents with the belief that they feared that if any chance whatever existed in the Universe, the entire Universe would falter and fail.

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<sup>14</sup>William James, The Will To Believe (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), p. 159.

Because James's moralistic philosophy was based on the chance of choosing good rather than bad, he reasoned that acts were good or bad, resulting in regret if the act proved to be bad. He further argued that if there were no chance possibilities in the Universe there could be no regret that the wrong choice of action had been taken, and regret was needed for improvement.

James supports and reaffirms this thesis in the last line of the following quotation on what he understands chance to mean

Make as great an uproar about chance as you please, I know that chance means pluralism and nothing more. If some of the members of the pluralism are bad, the philosophy of pluralism, whatever broad views it may deny me, permits me, at least, to turn to the other members with a clean breast of affection and an unsophisticated moral sense. And if I still wish to think of the world as a totality, it lets me feel that a world with a CHANCE in it of being altogether good, even if the chance never come to pass, is better than a world with no such chance at all. That 'chance' whose very notion I am exhorted and conjured to banish from my view of the future as the suicide of reason concerning it, that 'chance' is--what? Just this,-- the chance that in moral respects the future may be other and better than the past has been. This is the only chance we have any motive for supposing to exist.<sup>15</sup>

His arguments for chance, related to this thesis, free a person suffering melancholia to work out an individual solution offering a reason to exist, and thus, meaning in life.

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<sup>15</sup>William James, The Will To Believe (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), p. 179.

A melioristic doctrine offering possibilities for improvement in a person's situation was also the thought of Pragmatism. As a turning away from traditional thought in western philosophy, Pragmatism was characterized as distinctly American by the same vocabulary that the historian used to characterize American democracy, practical, progressive, individualistic, voluntaristic, expedient, adventurous, tolerant, and open-minded. Because James was concerned with the philosophical problems of the common man, and had a facility for writing in a popular style, Pragmatism was criticized for not being theoretic. James resented that Pragmatism was "described as a characteristically American movement, a sort of bobtailed scheme of thought, excellently fitted for the man on the street, who naturally hates theory and wants cash returns immediately."<sup>16</sup> James explained his use of terms such as cash value of beliefs as meaning their practical consequences. Practical was used in the context of meaning effective, concrete, and individual.

James was both a utilitarian and a nominalist in that he posited as the test for truth its practical consequences. His utilitarian view stressed the practical, and his nominalistic attitude showed concern for the particular. James's critics have interpreted his use of ideas "working," as being applied primarily to practical gain or physical change,

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<sup>16</sup>William James, The Meaning of Truth (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1911), p. 185.

but James also stressed his belief in ideas "working" because they had cash value in the mental world.

Metaphysical problems, which for centuries had been explored, were set aside by James so that he could concentrate on problems vital to the needs of persons in the present. If the discussion of a metaphysical problem such as monism, pluralism, spiritualism, or materialism led to no particular, concrete consequence in the future for a person, James believed there was no purpose in pursuing these pseudo-problems. He wrote

The pragmatic method in such cases is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to any one if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle.<sup>17</sup>

The emphasis on practical consequences in James's Pragmatism is fundamental to this study in the search to discover meaning in life through the pragmatic method.

Promise was what James offered; courage and audacity were what he showed in defending Pragmatism as a philosophy to the traditional, intellectual community both in America and on the continent. The raw, frontier American experience with its need for action and success was an element in identifying Pragmatism as an American philosophy. However,

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<sup>17</sup>William James, Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1907), p. 45.

Renouvier gave an intimation of Pragmatism in French thought when he "maintained that belief and even certitude are not exclusively intellectual affairs, but that affirmation involves also feeling and will."<sup>18</sup>

James's Pragmatic Theory of Truth posited the thesis that for something to be true it must make a difference in one's life in terms of satisfaction. The difference between the truth of a belief and its falsity was this practical consequence. To believe was to act, and the truth of a belief was whether it carried an individual prosperously from one experience to another; if it did satisfactorily, it was true. Knowledge was experience; truth was practical consequence.

James stated the Pragmatic Theory of Truth in lectures at Lowell Institute in Boston in 1906, and at Columbia University in New York in 1907. Believing his philosophy had been misunderstood by philosophers who wished to discredit it as no philosophy at all, he wrote a sequel to Pragmatism, which contained the published lectures called The Meaning of Truth. He wrote the sequel as an answer to the misinterpretations of his meaning of truth, which he considered so simple as to be obvious, and for future students of philosophy. He made in The Meaning of Truth the definitive statement

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<sup>18</sup>Frederick Copleston, S. J., A History of Philosophy (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), Vol. 8, p. 102.

The pivotal part of my book named Pragmatism is its account of the relation called 'truth' which may obtain between an idea (opinion, belief, statement, or what not) and its object.

'Truth,' I there say, 'is a property of certain of our ideas. It means their agreement, as falsity means their disagreement, with reality. Pragmatists and intellectualists both accept this definition as a matter of course.

'Where our ideas [do] not copy definitely their object, what does agreement with that object mean?... Pragmatism asks its usual question.

"Grant an idea or belief to be true," it says, "what concrete difference will its being true make in any one's actual life? What experiences [may] be different from those which would obtain if the belief were false? How will the truth be realized? What, in short, is the truth's cash value in experiential terms?" The moment pragmatism asks this question, it sees the answer: TRUE IDEAS ARE THOSE THAT WE CAN ASSIMILATE, VALIDATE, CORROBORATE, AND VERIFY. FALSE IDEAS ARE THOSE THAT WE CANNOT. That is the practical difference it makes to us to have true ideas; that therefore is the meaning of truth, for it is all that truth is known as.

'The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth HAPPENS to an idea. It BECOMES true, is MADE true by events. Its verity IS in fact an event, a process, the process namely of its verifying itself, its verIFICATION. Its validity is the process of its validation.<sup>19</sup>

New experiences added to accepted belief with verification of the mediated belief was James's method for making the theory work. He believed the person had the right to choose a moral conclusion if it brought more satisfaction as long as

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<sup>19</sup>William James, The Meaning of Truth (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1911), pp. v, vi.



known truths with their conclusions were taken into account.

James posited the reality of relations, and that relations were objects of experience. Feeling and sensation were pure experience which James affirmed as "the immediate flux of life which furnishes the material to our later reflection with its conceptual categories,"<sup>20</sup> and which evolved in one's ordinary experience. It is the religious feeling and sensation from pure experience which contributed to the conflict of the person educated in evolutionary natural science, and whose intellect negated this religious feeling.

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<sup>20</sup>William James, Essays in Radical Empiricism (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1922), p. 93.

## CHAPTER IV

"The solid meaning of life is always the same eternal thing, --the marriage, namely, of some unhabitual ideal, however special, with some fidelity, courage, and endurance;..."<sup>1</sup>

### The Humanist Option

James's Pragmatic Theory of Truth used as a method for finding meaning in life was a primary function of his pragmatic philosophy. His philosophical concern was to find a system of thought that would lead him out of his recurrent experiences with morbid depression and enable him to lead a productive life. His faith in the ability of common people to act morally and progressively making their own truth has caused James's Pragmatism often to be thought of as a Humanistic philosophy.

From his work in attempting to find an answer that would enable him to cope with despair, has come the purpose of this study which is to ascertain if his pragmatic philosophy can work for other persons suffering in a similar situation. It is important to the inquiry to emphasize that James considered Pragmatism as a Theory of Meaning to be used as a method.

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<sup>1</sup>William James, Talks To Teachers (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1924), p. 299.

Pragmatism was for James a part of an uncompleted arc for a philosophical system; a system which he did not live to complete. Hence, it is as method that it is practicable to apply his Theory of Truth to search for meaning.

Before seeking James's answer, the universality of the problem can be identified, not only from Frankl's efforts to find a psychological solution and Tolstoy's religious experience, as explained in Chapter I, but in the culmination of the work of C. G. Jung, the psychologist and philosopher, who sought an empirical answer to the problem of life's meaning. Like James, Jung could accept neither a totally psychological answer nor religious experience because of conflicting feelings that would not let him rest intellectually nor emotionally. Both James and Jung, because they were incapacitated physically and mentally by an inexplicable depression, found it necessary to search for an empirical solution while acknowledging a feeling of religious stirring. Jung stated, "The meaning of my existence is that life has addressed a question to me."<sup>2</sup> He had the common problem with James that the answer must be found in a solution based on scientific fact. He wrote, "This I must see revealed empirically in order to accept it."<sup>3</sup> Jung and James each felt they had

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<sup>2</sup>C. G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), p. 318.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 319.

the mission of reconciling the conflict between religious and scientific beliefs forced on them by their sensitivity to mankind's progress from the darkness of the past, and their vision of the future in an evolutionary, scientific world. James, speaking to his Harvard colleagues in 1892 said, "We have unquestionably a great cloud-bank of ancestral blindness weighing down upon us, only transiently riven here and there by fitful revelations of the truth."<sup>4</sup> Jung wrote with less hope in 1959 of "...the psychic primal night which is the same today as it has been for countless millions of years."<sup>5</sup>

For Jung, the meaning of his existence was the question life had addressed to him, but James felt the need of a more pragmatic meaning that would lead to satisfaction and truth. Suicide was, throughout much of James's life, a possible answer to melancholia. Contrary to the consideration that suicide might be the act committed to finalize life when one is content and happy, and that life end in this state of satisfaction, James suggested suicide as the solution to depression when one no longer chooses to wait to see if the suffering or emptiness will abate.

Inner tensions he could not resolve and the lack of will to control his philosophical questioning repeatedly led James

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<sup>4</sup>William James, Talks To Teachers (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1924), p. 268.

<sup>5</sup>C. G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), p. 269.

to thoughts of suicide as his answer to despondency. In his essay "Is Life Worth Living?" he explains the WHY of the act of suicide for himself and for other persons.

That life is NOT worth living the whole army of suicides declare, --... We...must 'ponder these things' also, for we are of one substance with these suicides, and their life is the life we share...

Too much questioning and too little active responsibility lead...to the edge of the slope, at the bottom of which lie pessimism and the nightmare or suicidal view of life.<sup>6</sup>

Writing to his friend, Benjamin Paul Blood, in 1896, he wrote, "I take it that no man is educated who has never dallied with the thought of suicide."<sup>7</sup>

Alexander Bain, the British psychologist, helped free James from the idea of suicide as a plan of action. Bain had made an analysis of habit which James used as a method for the control of his mental tensions. Control of his thoughts came to James through the accumulation of habits of thought, and these acts of will were his salvation. It is to be recognized that James never expected the control of thoughts by habit to make one happy or optimistic. A plan of action developed through will and belief could restore creative power to the morbidly depressed, but James held to his premise that a person was temperamentally optimistic or pessimistic.

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<sup>6</sup>William James, The Will To Believe (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), pp. 37-9.

<sup>7</sup>Henry James, The Letters of William James (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1920), Vol. II, p. 39.

Melancholia, James believed, came from repletion, and he found support for this belief in Tolstoy's similar discovery.

James wrote

It is, indeed, a remarkable fact that sufferings and hardships do not, ...abate the love of life; they seem, on the contrary, usually to give it a keener zest. The sovereign source of melancholy is repletion. Need and struggle are what excite and inspire us; our hour of triumph is what brings the void.<sup>8</sup>

He found that Tolstoy understood the same source of melancholia from his novel War and Peace

He learnt that man is meant for happiness, and that this happiness is in him, in the satisfaction of the daily needs of existence, and that unhappiness is the fatal result, not of our need, but of our abundance.<sup>9</sup>

James argued the significance of life was diminished by repletion and abundance. His reason for holding melancholia to be the result of repletion was that when social, economic and professional goals were satisfied there was no longer a need for strenuous continued effort which supports the contention of this thesis that abundance leads to apathy. Based on his premise that happiness stems from the work of fulfilling daily needs, he maintained that melancholia resulted when the future held no need for work that offered risk, and

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<sup>8</sup>William James, The Will to Believe (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), p. 47.

<sup>9</sup>William James, Talks To Teachers (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1924), p. 256.

required daring and courage.

James contended the reason life was worthwhile was because of these elements of risk, daring, and courage which gave zest to life. He reasoned that when repletion removed the necessity for standing up to life against every obstacle, it brought not the satisfaction and happiness that was the expectation, but rather negated all the ideals that made life worth living.

Reasoning that repletion was the opposite of human nature IN EXTREMIS James asserted that repletion was a cause of melancholia because a person needed struggle in daily work with the chance of progress to make life meaningful. Repletion removed the necessity for will and belief to carry through a plan of action. In support of the thesis, it is possible that a need for a plan of action could fill the void for the mentally depressed.

A primary reason of James for holding that repletion causes melancholia was that repletion withheld the possibility for intrinsic good in the life situation of the depressed person because there was no satisfaction left in future effort.

Arguing against James's position is the possibility that melancholia is caused in many persons by too much daily work so that they become frustrated and fall into despair over never accomplishing their goals. From his personal experience, James would have to admit that mental stress and depression

were also the result of attempted work which required more effort than the depressed person was able to muster. In response to this argument, the emphasis of this particular thesis is that James's pragmatic solution is a possibility for some persons, not all persons, suffering melancholia. However, it is noteworthy that both James and Tolstoy separately arrived at the premise that repletion causes melancholia.

Another argument against James's concept of repletion is that usually individuals have new goals set that they are eager to attempt before they accomplish the present goal, and long range possibilities are always in the future. But these are not the persons who suffer the void, but fulfil their own needs. For James, who never completed his philosophical system, there was always unfinished work and recurrent melancholia.

James's problem came from deep, philosophical conflict for which he did find relief through his Pragmatic Theory of Truth with the belief that to think was to act, and to act was a plan of action which he followed by an accumulation of habits. He did experience repletion in his personal life and professional success in that it was a source of great satisfaction and happiness, but still he experienced an inner lack and void which he could not explain. He finally came to the conclusion that for some persons, not for all persons, there was a need for struggle, risk, and courage in satisfying daily needs, and fighting human nature IN EXTREMIS for life to have purpose and meaning.



The method of the Pragmatic Theory of Truth works for some people suffering melancholia from repletion because they think and act on an unhabitual ideal requiring present and future effort. An ideal that was unhabitual and the attainment of which required struggle, daring, and risk could fill the void following the hour of triumph. Much of its value lay in the expectation and eagerness which it engendered in a person. An ideal for James "must be something intellectually conceived, something of which we are not unconscious, if we have it; and it must carry with it that of outlook, uplift, and brightness that go with all intellectual facts."<sup>10</sup>

As a pragmatist, James saw the possibility for meaning coming both through a plan of action working toward realization of the unhabitual ideal or from "this higher vision of an inner significance"<sup>11</sup> that came to a person unexpectedly. As a naturalist, James recognized the sensory aspects of feelings in determining what ideals were considered significant. Without feelings all ideals weighed equally and lost their particular value. James appreciated the value for significance in life found by Emerson and Wordsworth in nature and Whitman in the human crowd, but for those persons who did not possess this sensitivity and feeling, his belief was that the pragmatic

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<sup>10</sup>William James, Talks To Teachers (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1924), p. 242.

<sup>11</sup>William James, Talks To Teachers (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1924), p. 242.

method was rational and expedient. When a plan of action evolved from an idea and had meaning, the action of working out the plan situationally, carrying one prosperously from one experience to another, lead from meaning to truth if the result brought satisfaction. To recover from the melancholia brought on by lack of meaning, it was possible to work through a plan of action and in the process find truth for oneself.

James was a voluntarist, believing that the feeling of satisfaction was intrinsic good, and that to think was a moral act which rescued a person from moral impotence. A person was not limited by deterministic belief which made one powerless to act in one's best interest. The element of risk in life gave zest, and belief operated to fulfil human needs. "It is only by risking our persons from one hour to another that we live at all. And often enough our faith beforehand in an uncertified result IS THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES THE RESULT COME TRUE...BELIEVE WHAT IS IN THE LINE OF YOUR NEEDS, for only by such belief is the need fulfilled."<sup>12</sup> If life were to be worth living, the belief that it was, as an idea and plan of action, made it so. The creation of new ideals and following untried paths in realizing them made recovery from melancholia possible. The pragmatic theory of meaning

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<sup>12</sup>William James, The Will To Believe (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), p. 59.

coupled with belief lead one to what was truth, and filled the void.

Life's significant needs for James were found in daily life which was made heroic by one's work. In an unfinished Universe there was chance to add novelty to the mundane. Precipitousness of action resulted in intrinsic good, or in evil, and gave life spirit. The thought that led to endless options, and a philosophy derived from experiences in a pluralistic Universe were what offered intellectual excitement in daily life. He believed the work of the academician, who labored indoors, to be as challenging as the hewer of wood who faced raw nature.

Ideals must have practical consequences for the human situation rather than offer only philosophical satisfaction. James stressed the importance of hourly or daily situational progress. Not abstractions, but in concrete, particular consequences were the significant, pragmatic solutions. An ideal that added zest to life needed to be unhabitual only to the person to whom it suddenly made life significant. The same ideal that was novel to one person's experience was worthless as an inspiration for another. The quality of uniqueness of the ideal to any given person at any given time was what made life meaningful. The ideal could appear worthless or destructive to the observer looking at it from an external, objective viewpoint. James explained what he conceived as an ideal when he spoke of his experience in the

North Carolina mountains where the mountaineers had stripped the forest to cultivate the coves and build their cabins, creating an ugly, denuded environment. His mountaineer driver told him

'Why, we ain't happy here, unless we are getting one of these coves under cultivation,' ...when THEY looked on the hideous stumps, what they thought of was personal victory. The chips, the girdled trees, and the vile split rails spoke of honest sweat, persistent toil and final reward. The cabin was a warrant of safety for self and wife and babes. In short, the clearing, which to me was a mere ugly picture on the retina, was to them a symbol redolent with moral memories and sang a very paean of duty, struggle, and success.<sup>13</sup>

This situation, which was what James called human nature IN EXTREMIS, demanded intensity of effort and courage with practical consequences giving meaning to life.

For pragmatists, progress in human morality and human experience became ideals. Unmet needs and unsolved problems made necessary the conception of new ideals. Old ideals became a part of the evolutionary past and were replaced. Novelty made progress toward fulfilling the needs more satisfying. James stated "...the thing of deepest--or, at any rate, of comparatively deepest--significance in life does seem to be its character of PROGRESS, or that strange union of reality with ideal novelty which it continues from one

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<sup>13</sup>William James, Talks To Teachers (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1924), pp. 233-4.

moment to another to present."<sup>14</sup>

He analyzed the need, the effort, the repletion, and the new inspiration for progress

What excites and interests...is the everlasting battle of the powers of light with those of darkness; with heroism, reduced to its bare chance, yet ever and anon snatching victory from the jaws of death...what our human emotions seem to require is the sight of the struggle going on. The moment the fruits are being merely eaten, things become ignoble. Sweat and effort, human nature strained to its uttermost and on the rack, yet getting through alive, and then turning its back on success to pursue another more rare and arduous still-- this is the sort of thing the presence of which inspires us.<sup>15</sup>

Beginning with accumulated habits of thought becoming an idea and plan of action, Pragmatism's Theory of Truth offered a method to release creative power for progress, not limited by determinism. Pragmatism was the method of evolutionary humanism.

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<sup>14</sup>William James, Talks To Teachers (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1924), p. 294.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 272.

## CHAPTER V

"...pragmatism may be a happy harmonizer of empiricist ways of thinking with the more religious demands of human beings."<sup>1</sup>

### The Religious Option

When the method of the Pragmatic Theory of Truth, working to achieve ideals, finding value in the risk and challenge of an unfinished Universe, does not suffice for them who ask, "Is this all?", James's philosophy of Pragmatism offers the possibility for meaning through the religious option. Both the victim of depression and the evolutionary scientific person may feel unsatisfied religious stirrings. James's own need was to find a philosophical truth with which he could live because he was the scientific person with religious impulses, and suffered a religious-scientific crisis that stemmed from his historical time in philosophical history. The religious option that James arrived at by the pragmatic method was a science of religions.

James's argument was that pluralism in the Universe was the reason that a science of religions was a possible option in resolving his conflict. He contended pluralism

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<sup>1</sup>William James, Pragmatism And Other Essays (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1963), p. 33.

was the only tenable philosophy for the evolutionist. He held religion must submit to scientific investigation, and because evolution had shown nothing was totally known nor completed, pluralism made this continuous investigation possible.

He maintained that for him, as a pluralist, that parts of reality are related externally because all things have an external environment and things neither include nor control all other things. In support of his pluralistic belief James asserted

For pluralism, all that we are required to admit as the constitution of reality is what we ourselves find empirically realized in every minimum of finite life. ...nothing real is absolutely simple, that every smallest bit of experience is ...plurally related, that each relation is one aspect, character, or function, way of its being taken, or way of its taking something else; and that a bit of reality when actively engaged in one of these relations is not BY THAT VERY FACT engaged in all the other relations simultaneously.<sup>2</sup>

As evidence of pluralism, he held that there were peculiarities in a finite world that were known to be true and which were impossible for an infinite world. Evolutionary science showed everything is not already possessed as in an

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<sup>2</sup>William James, A Pluralistic Universe (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1909), pp. 322-3.

infinite world. Furthermore, a finite world has succession which as a pluralist he believed offered possibility for improvement. These characteristics of pluralism are important in the support of the thesis because they offer a chance for restoration of a person's well-being.

Arguing against a block-universe, James insisted pluralism was a hypothesis that must be considered because the Universe "MAY be a universe only strung-along, not rounded in and closed. Reality MAY exist distributively just as it sensibly seems to..."<sup>3</sup>

In support of this thesis, the pluralistic philosophy of James gives the person suffering from melancholia the need to use the pragmatic method for recovery by putting into effect a personal plan of action and by showing that when a person suffers despair neither the Absolute world nor other persons suffer that particular despair. If the Universe were absolute instead of pluralistic, the depression would be part of a unity of despair. Obviously, the depression is an inner, personal experience, and James's pluralistic Universe offers unlimited possibilities for the individual to work his way to recovery using the Pragmatic Theory of Truth.

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<sup>3</sup>William James, A Pluralistic Universe (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1909), p. 328.



Understanding the rebellious feelings against religious belief that preceded speculative melancholy and ended in despair, he concluded, "Pessimism is essentially a religious disease. In the form of it to which you are most liable, it consists in nothing but a religious demand to which there comes no normal religious reply."<sup>4</sup> The unexplainable feeling that came to some persons with the desire to believe that the manifestations of nature were expressions of the divinity of God was negated by their intellect leaving them in a state of emotional conflict.

The reaction toward this confused frustration and rebellion concerning religious belief for some persons was to form a plan of action to prove that there was no God. Regardless of the results, the plan of action was the impetus toward seeking relief from speculative melancholy. The influences of the religious beliefs of centuries, as opposed to the facts of evolutionary science, created in James an intellectual and emotional restlessness with the need to find the answer for the possibility of religious truth in an evolutionary world.

James attacked the problem, not only as an empiricist, but from pluralistic and tychistical viewpoints. Believing a pluralistic Universe could admit experiential evidence his

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<sup>4</sup>William James, The Will To Believe (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), p. 39.

pragmatic philosophy recognized chance. James posited that a pluralistic Universe came about as the result of chance events, that happened plurally and connected relationally, evolving into a Universe that was novel and subject to continuous change. He could accept the possibility of the religious option as a part of reality because of the multiplicity of these pluralistic relationships.

He chose to follow

The pragmatic rule that the meaning of a concept may always be found, if not in some sensible particular which it directly designates, then in some particular difference in the course of human experience which its being true will make... "God" means that you can dismiss certain kinds of fear.<sup>5</sup>

Later in an exposition of Pragmatism he wrote, "Using the pragmatic test of the meaning of concepts, I had shown the concept of the absolute to MEAN nothing but the holiday--giver, the banisher of cosmic fear."<sup>6</sup> If belief in the concept of "God" gave a person the particular consequences of a moral holiday and security, the belief was true.

James believed that the criteria used for the pragmatic method must be descriptive, concrete, and theoretical while the outcome to be true must have particular consequences

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<sup>5</sup>Walter G. Muelder, Laurence Sears, Anne V. Schlabach, The Development of American Philosophy (Cambridge: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1960), pp. 390-1.

<sup>6</sup>William James, The Meaning of Truth (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1911), p. ix.

affecting future action. Because James's religious belief was moralistic, he was concerned as to whether or not the practical consequences of religious belief would provide a person with increased moral vigor to fight for good against evil. The vital benefits of optimism, inspired activity, happiness, and security also were subject to his investigation.

The religious-scientific hypothesis met James's requirement that an hypothesis must be live, forced, and momentous. The hypothesis was live because it related to the needs of the individual, and the possibility, if true, would make a difference in one's life. If its truth made a difference, the person would act on the result. In turn, the hypothesis was forced, rather than avoidable, because the religious feeling persists, and momentous because the idea of God, or Gods, was an ultimate concern of the individual, as well as offering vital benefits in this world. If the hypothesis for the existence of God, or Gods, worked, it would be true, resulting in the satisfaction that came from optimism, moral vigor, spiritual energy, ethical behavior, and a happy life. The evidence for religious belief must be discovered by descriptive, theoretical methods based on the concrete way of seeing which James considered the original contribution Pragmatism had made to philosophy. Concepts were the tools for description and human needs and experiences determined what was classified for description.

A science of religions was the outcome when an hypothesis of mediation between the commonalities of religious doctrines and

psychological facts was studied by James. He began the investigation by working on a series of lectures about natural religion for the University of Edinburgh in which he intended to describe 'Man's Religious Appetites' and 'Their Satisfaction through Philosophy'. The lectures were based upon the most extreme examples of the religious experience. Following the pragmatic method for the inquiry, two propositions were considered, the first, the EXISTENTIAL JUDGMENT, and the second, the VALUE or SPIRITUAL JUDGMENT. The EXISTENTIAL JUDGMENT was proposed to answer the questions concerning the history and nature of religious belief, and the value or spiritual judgment to answer the question of the significance of religious belief.

In writing the lectures the psychological content became predominant, and the project was completed as twenty lectures known as the Gifford Lectures and later published as The Varieties of Religious Experience. By investigating personal documents, manuscripts, and the particular experiences of the religiously constituted, James arrived at the possibility for the science of religions.

Religious experience...engenders myths, superstitions, dogmas, creeds, and metaphysical theologies, and criticisms of one set of these by the adherents of another. Of late, impartial classifications and comparisons have become possible, alongside of the denunciations and anathemas by which the commerce

between creeds used exclusively to be carried on. We have the beginnings of a 'Science of Religions'.<sup>7</sup>

He defined religion as "Religion...shall mean for us THE FEELINGS, 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."<sup>8</sup> Because melancholia and lack of meaning for both the religious and irreligious person are problems considered in this study, it is noteworthy that James found melancholia to be a significant factor in understanding reality, recognizing evil as a condition of life. Feeling was primary, as opposed to intellectual processes for understanding religious impulse. "The theories which Religion generates, being thus variable, are secondary; and if you wish to grasp her essence, you must look to the feelings and the conduct as being the more constant elements."<sup>9</sup>

James held the view, based on his psychological research into consciousness both as a professor of psychology and author of a psychological study, that there was beyond consciousness a marginal consciousness that was subliminal, and which was a higher part of consciousness. When a person felt a need caused by an uneasy feeling that there was some inner lack, the recognition and acknowledgment of this feeling

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<sup>7</sup>William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), p. 433.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 504.

was the beginning of communication with this higher part of consciousness. James posited consciousness as "...a steady flow, a stream of ideas, perceptions and relations."<sup>10</sup> He suggested that there were different kinds of consciousness and that "The other kinds of consciousness bear witness to a much wider universe of experiences, from which our belief selects and emphasizes such parts as best satisfy our needs."<sup>11</sup>

He had departed from the British empiricist view of consciousness as mental impressions which succeeded each other, but were not related. From his psychological research into consciousness, James was willing to accept as evidence for the subliminal or marginal consciousness the experiences of persons in this state of higher consciousness. His critics argued that this kind of evidence violated his scientific, empirical philosophy. James maintained the evidence was acceptable for an empirical hypothesis because it was a part of experience. The belief for which he argued was that the experiences of some religiously constituted persons seemingly made them immune to all logical attack and that in a pluralistic Universe their subconscious selves could have made a connection with the higher part of consciousness.

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<sup>10</sup>William James, Pragmatism And Other Essays (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1963), p. xi.

<sup>11</sup>Henry James, The Letters of William James (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1920), Vol. II, p. 213.

Unlike British empiricism, James's approach to that psychology included the subjective aspects of feelings and emotions as a part of personal experience. When a person experienced the feeling of a lack of meaning and asked, "Is this all?", it was the beginning of reaching for the higher part of consciousness and personal salvation.

He becomes conscious that this higher part is conterminous and continuous with a MORE of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with, and in a fashion get on board of and save himself when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck.<sup>12</sup>

The MORE was one of the many worlds of consciousness with religious feelings in this world a part of the subliminal consciousness. When experiences which have taken place in the other worlds of consciousness at times connected with experiences in this world, the result was the creation of higher energies in the individual. The release of the higher energies that gave some persons a sense of religious communion with the MORE possibly came from the same source of energy that inspired other persons to work towards ideals and moral good in the humanist philosophy; each offering meaning and purpose to the individual. James believed because of the communion with the higher energies from the subliminal world

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<sup>12</sup>William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), p. 508.

of consciousness that work was accomplished in this world which brought satisfaction. He considered the possibility that the higher energies of a person were from an invisible world of consciousness.

The further limits of our being plunge...into an altogether other dimension of existence from the sensible and merely 'understandable' world... So far as our ideal impulses originate in this region,...we belong to it in a more intimate sense than that in which we belong to the visible world, for we belong in the most intimate sense wherever our ideals belong.<sup>13</sup>

Attacked by the naturalist argument that human consciousness was the highest consciousness possible, James answered the argument by stating

...the drift of all the evidence we have seems to me to sweep us very strongly towards the belief in some form of superhuman life with which we may, unknown to ourselves, be co-conscious.<sup>14</sup>

James, who was an evolutionary naturalist, held that this co-conscious, superhuman life was the MORE, which somehow in ways still unknown in an unfinished Universe, became the marginal, higher part of consciousness. Changes wrought upon the finite self in this world of consciousness were moral,

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<sup>13</sup>William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912), pp. 515-6.

<sup>14</sup>William James, A Pluralistic Universe (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1909), p. 309.



working for good, as a result of this subconscious experience.

Carrying his arguments for the idea of a finite God further, he asserted that if the God of his inner, personal experience, or a superhuman consciousness, was a part of a pluralistic Universe having an external environment of its own, it must be finite. Moreover, if God's functions are similar to an individual's functions because each is a part of a pluralistic system, each must be necessarily finite.

In relation to this thesis, it would seem logical that a limited, finite God would be of more help to an evolutionary scientific person suffering from melancholia than no God at all. If evolutionary thought precluded belief in an Absolute God, but the person was torn by a conflict of religious feeling and scientific knowledge, James's finite God made possible by a pluralist Universe would appear to be a possibility as a limited God who might cooperate in overcoming melancholia. For some persons a finite God would be acceptable as a spiritual beginning for recovery when they needed more to believe in than the pursuit of an unhabitual ideal.

It is the contention of this inquiry that the weakest argument for James's Pragmatism as a philosophy offering the possibility for finding meaning in life, and resolving the speculative melancholy of the evolutionary scientific person with religious feelings, was James's concept of a finite God. The existence of an omniscient, Absolute God, or no God, were

two traditional beliefs offering options. James's concept of a finite God, or the polytheism of many Gods, originated in his pluralistic philosophy of a Universe that has been known and understood only in fragments.

What were James's reasons for his belief in a finite God? The idea of a finite God satisfied him because it was compatible with both his moralistic and pluralistic philosophy. Pragmatically, the belief in a finite God was based on the same contention that if there was a possible choice between good and evil, taking into account all known truths, the freedom of will of a person gave the right to choose for the moral view. Because of religious feelings James felt a need for a God and believed his rational choice precluded an Absolute God because when he suffered melancholia he felt external to God who did not suffer.

He further reasoned that God must be finite because the evil in the world showed the limitations of God's capabilities; either God did not know of the evil which showed a lack of knowledge, or did not have the power to deal with it; hence, James argued God was finite.

James's arguments for the idea of a finite God and the use he made of them were discussed by Copleston

This idea of a finite God is used by James in his substitution of 'meliorism' for optimism on the one hand and pessimism on the other. According to the meliorist the world is not necessarily becoming better, nor is it necessarily becoming worse; it CAN become better, if, that is to say, man freely cooperates

with the finite God in making it better. In other words, the future is not inevitably determined, either for better or for worse, not even by God. There is room in the universe for novelty, and human effort has a positive contribution to make in the establishment of a moral order.<sup>15</sup>

James opposed the belief that only connections creating the one were possible when it was just as probable that there were counter-connections creating the many. If unity in the Universe came as a result of connections not presently knowable, why was it not equally possible that the Universe was composed of unrelated parts not presently knowable? In a pluralistic Universe polytheism was as worthy of consideration as an Absolute God.

Because James's religious beliefs were moralistic, he could not reconcile an Absolute God with evil in the world. Pragmatically, the idea of a finite God, or Gods, would not have to account for good or evil, nor determinism and indeterminism. His answer to an infinite God in a world where evil existed was

We can vaguely generalize this into the doctrine that all the evil in the universe is but instrumental to its greater perfection. But the scale of the evil actually in sight defies all human tolerance...A God who can relish such superfluties of horror is no God

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<sup>15</sup>Frederick Copleston, S. J., A History of Philosophy (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., Vol. 8, 1967), p. 101.

for human beings to appeal to. His animal spirits are too high. In other words the "Absolute" with his one purpose, is not the man-like God of common people.<sup>16</sup>

If God was finite, one could invest strenuous effort and moral vigor in contributing to one's own well-being and future good, and also help God. An evolutionary Universe with novelty, diversity, and chance with options for the individual was possible with a finite God. The evidence admissible for James was the events of experience, and his scientific investigation precluded belief in an omniscient, Absolute God because he could find no evidence.

James admitted in the extremity of the final hours of life he believed some persons needed greater reassurance than a finite God could offer. "There can be no doubt that when men are reduced to their last sick extremity absolutism is the only saving scheme. Pluralistic moralism simply makes their teeth chatter, it refrigerates the very heart within their breast."<sup>17</sup> Similarly, it is acknowledged in this study that the concept of a finite God does not answer the question of "Is this all?" for those needing more inner help than a finite God could offer. Perhaps, the concept of a finite God, limited in abilities, and who needs help, introduces only a new burden for those searching for relief from

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<sup>16</sup>William James, Pragmatism And Other Essays (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1963), p. 64.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 128

melancholia.

The omission of the study of immortality, while investigating religious beliefs, is another argument against the hypothesis of James's Pragmatism offering the possibility for finding meaning in life. There is a practical need for immortality in many persons arising from the feeling of wanting to believe in the continuity of their lives. The purpose and meaning for living a moral life lies in the belief in personal immortality for some persons. Timelessness diminishes the urgency for immediate decision and action with the promise of eternity in another world. Jung writes, "...we must not forget that for most people it means a great deal to assume that their lives will have an indefinite continuity beyond their present existence. They live more sensibly, feel better, and are more at peace."<sup>18</sup>

By his own admission James chose not to consider the problem of immortality because he had no evidence for an after-life, although he recognized that religion and immortality are synonomous concepts in the thought of many persons. James did not consider the study of immortality as primary because he believed the realization of ideals in the present life was more important. If James had applied the method of his Pragmatic Theory of Truth to investigate the practical consequences of a belief in immortality, he would have made a further

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<sup>18</sup>C. G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), p. 301.

contribution of his pragmatic thought to those persons suffering from depression and the religious-scientific conflict.

## CHAPTER VI

"The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief..."<sup>1</sup>

### Conclusion

James's Pragmatism offered the possibility for finding meaning in life for persons suffering depression, and an explanation for the evolutionary scientific person with religious feelings through the humanist option of working for the unhabitual ideal and a doctrine of meliorism, and the religious option of a science of religions. The Pragmatic Theory of Truth, used as method, leads the individual to satisfaction and truth.

First, it is necessary to recapitulate James's Pragmatism relative to this study. James, a seminal thinker in philosophy, believed that to think was to act so that an idea was a plan of action which had meaning. If the results of the action had practical, in the sense of particular, consequences that gave satisfaction, the meaning was true. The pragmatic method was empirical based on the concrete way of seeing resulting in experiential evidence. Because reality came from experience with inner, personal experience as

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<sup>1</sup>William James, Pragmatism And Other Essays (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1963), p. 36.

primary, and feelings were recognized as a part of experience, the pragmatic method was practicable for both religious and irreligious persons.

James's Pragmatism offered promise to the individual because the philosophy posited free will, tychism, and pluralism. Free will, for James, meant novelties in the undetermined Universe, affording a person freedom to believe in moral will and freeing one from moral impotence. Free will and release from determinism enabled some persons to increase creative powers with intellectual and physical well-being. A tychistic philosophy, positing chance in the Universe, meant that the past would not be copied nor repeated so a person could experience the eagerness and expectation of a fresh beginning. James's pluralistic Universe, of which he considered only fragments to be known, was future oriented.

The voluntaristic aspect was important to the humanist option making a person's will predominant so that one could exercise moral will and moral choice. A doctrine of meliorism was thus possible to improve the human situation.

Repletion and abundance were responsible for lack of meaning in life according to James. For meaning, life needed human nature IN EXTREMIS. By working for an unhabitual ideal which involved risk and daring, and demanded endurance, strenuous effort, and courage one could find meaning and purpose. Fighting for moral good, as opposed to evil, gave vital benefits of optimism, happiness, and ethical behavior.



The humanist option of working for ideals, succeeding, and finding human need that led to new ideals filled the void that James believed caused lack of meaning and depression.

The religious option James offered was the possibility for a science of religions. To mediate between religion and science, he proposed as a basis for agreement the higher part of consciousness, from many worlds of consciousness, to be known as the MORE, and to be synonymous with the subconscious of the psychologist. A recognition of the commonalities of religious experiences and psychological facts was the beginning of cooperation between religion and science.

James's position that a finite God in a pluralistic Universe would not have to accept responsibility for evil in the world, but who is limited and needs help, would suffice for some persons in depression or religious-scientific conflict crisis, but for others a finite God would add another burden. It is recommended in this study that a finite God in a pluralistic Universe be a subject for further consideration in a science of religions.

Because James's concern was for working for ideals in the present world, he left the study of the pragmatic approach to immortality for future consideration. In the future, immortality possibly will be a problem to be mediated in a science of religions.

In accord with the reasons stated in this study, James's Pragmatism is found to be a future oriented philosophy with

endless possibilities for the individual who suffers unexplainable depression and despair to discover what offers personal satisfaction and truth, and thus, meaning in life; and the possibility of a science of religions as the solution for the evolutionary scientific person with a religious-scientific crisis.

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