3 John Dewey's naturalization of William James

William James was John Dewey's philosophical hero, because his "biological psychology" of the 1890 *The Principles of Psychology* led Dewey out of bondage in the land of Hegel and into the wonderful land of naturalism. Dewey attempted to repay his debt by passionately expounding and defending James's philosophy over a period of fifty-one years, stretching from 1897 to 1948. While not calling into question the philosophical brilliance of these essays, it will be shown that they gave a blatantly distorted, self-serving account of James's philosophy, the basic aims of which were to despookify and depersonalize it so that it would agree with Dewey's naturalism and socialization of all things distinctively human. The intent of my "exposé" of this act of hero worship-turned-philosophical usurpation, however, is to bring into bold relief the salient features of their philosophies by highlighting their deep-seated differences. Because of the limitations of space, only Dewey's attempted naturalization of James will be considered.

"Naturalism" has meant very different things to different philosophers. Since my claim is that Dewey attempted to make James into "a good naturalist like himself," it is Dewey's sense that is relevant. His naturalism comprises two components. First, there is no ontological dualism between the mental and the physical, be it in the form of an irreducible mental/physical substance or a mental/physical event dualism, psychological states and processes being reducible to certain distinctive ways in which an organism interacts with its natural environment. This is called "biological behaviorism" by Dewey and is invidiously contrasted with a "physiological behaviorism" that understands mental phenomena exclusively in terms of physical processes and states within the organism. Second,
the sciences alone give us knowledge of reality, and they accomplish this through an objective common pattern of inquiry. Thus, every kind of individual is a "natural kind" in the sense that its nature is to be determined through scientific inquiry. Though Dewey would abhor this terminology, this in fact is what his scientism is committed to, minus, of course, any kind of fixity of species or nonfallibilist claims to certainty. Each of these two components will now be discussed in turn.

I ONTOLOGICAL NATURALISM

Dewey's attempt to transform James into an ontological naturalist occurs primarily in his 1940 "The Vanishing Subject in the Psychology of James." Because this essay shifts back and forth between an italicized and unitalicized use of "Psychology," its thesis is ambiguous between the self and consciousness in general, disappearing from the book, Psychology (which was Dewey's abbreviation for The Principles of Psychology), and its disappearing from the psychology developed therein. (Notice the unitalicized "Psychology" in the essay's title but the italicized use of "Psychology" on LW, 14:156, 166.) This distinction is important because there are numerous metaphysical and epistemological excursions interspersed with psychology throughout the book, in spite of James's repeated resolutions to the contrary. That Dewey argues for the stronger disappearance-within-the-book thesis, and thus for the self's disappearance from James's philosophy in general, becomes apparent when Dewey appeals for support to James's 1904–5 doctrine of pure experience, which is the centerpiece of James's metaphysics and epistemology. Pace Dewey, it will be argued that the self disappears neither from James's psychology nor from his book The Principles of Psychology, nor from his philosophy in general.

Throughout The Principles of Psychology, James strictly adheres to the commonsense dualism between conscious experiences and the physical objects and events that are perceived and referred to by these experiences. Dewey claims that James's acceptance of this dualism is merely verbal, a concession that he made for tactical purposes to his opponents – the associationists, rationalists, and automatists – all of whom accepted this dualism. This is not unreasonable, since James's major purpose in Principles was to draw together all of the recent
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work in psychology for the purpose of helping it to attain the status of a legitimate science. To challenge the almost universally accepted mental/physical dualism would have alienated his audience and thus been a self-defeating distraction.

Dewey advances a number of considerations in support of this thesis. First, there is James’s subsequent claim in his 1904 “Does ‘Consciousness’ Exist?” that “For twenty years past I have mistrusted ‘consciousness’ as an entity” (ERE, 4). James is referring back to his 1884 “The Function of Cognition” in which the “epistemological gulf” is eliminated “so that the whole truth-relation falls inside of the continuities of concrete experience, and is constituted of particular processes, varying with every object and subject, and susceptible of being described in detail.” While there is no explicit denial of the ontological dualism between the mental and the physical, there is a hint at one place of his later doctrine of pure experience when he says that “…we believe that we all know and think about and talk about the same world, because we believe our PERCEPTS are possessed by us in common” (MT, 29–30). Herein there is no duplication in consciousness of the outer objects perceived, otherwise two minds could not share one and the same percept. Dewey speculates that if James were to have rewritten Principles after 1904, he would have completely dispensed with consciousness as a special sort of entity, be it of a substantial or eventful sort, and replaced it with a full-blown biological behaviorism.

If Dewey’s disappearance thesis were based only on this speculation as to how James would have rewritten Principles, it does not show that within the book or the psychology developed within it there is any such disappearance, nor even doubts about the mental/physical dualism. According to Dewey, the doubts about consciousness are expressed not just subsequent to Principles but in Principles itself. James had whittled the self down to the passing thought — a momentary total stage of consciousness — and, supposedly, he then went on “to express a doubt about the existence of even a separate ‘thought’ or mental state of any kind as the knower, saying that it might be held that ‘the existence of this thinker would be given to us rather as logical postulate than as that direct inner preception of spiritual activity which we naturally believe ourselves to have’ ” (LW, 14:157). Immediately upon expressing this “doubt,” James refers to an “important article” by Souriau in which the existence of
consciousness as some sort of aboriginal stuff is denied, which anticipates James's doctrine of pure experience.

Pace Dewey's account, James does not express any doubts of his own in Principles about the existence of consciousness, but merely alludes to a theory that is eliminative of consciousness. Immediately upon his brief exposition of this theory he adds that "Speculations like this traverse common-sense" and he "will therefore treat the last few pages as a parenthetical digression, and from now to the end of the volume revert to the path of common-sense again" (PP, 1:291). This hardly is an expression of doubt on James's part. Far from expressing any doubts about consciousness in Principles, James, as will be seen, availed himself of every opportunity to take the spooky route.

Fortunately, Dewey has stronger things to say in favor of his disappearance thesis than the false claim that James expressed doubts about consciousness in Principles and counterfactual speculations about how James would have rewritten his psychology subsequent to 1904. Of more weight is Dewey's appeal to the overall orientation and tenor of Principles, along with the biological-behavioristic approach to certain topics, most notably the self.

As for general orientation, there is a concerted attempt, no doubt due to James's medical background, to give a biological grounding to psychology which "if it had been consistently developed it would have resulted in a biological behavioristic account of psychological phenomena" (LW, 14:158). Dewey also enlists in support of his behavioral interpretation James's claim that "pursuance of future ends and choice of means for their attainment are the mark and criterion of mentality in a phenomenon" (PP, 1:21). But, as Dewey correctly points out, since this is said to be only "the mark and criterion by which to circumscribe the subject-matter of this work as far as action enters in," it allows for psychic phenomena that do not admit of a behavioral analysis (LW, 14:158–9).

The strongest support for the disappearance thesis comes from the way James handles specific topics. An important case in point is James's account of habits in terms of neural pathways in the brain established by past experiences that allow for subsequent reflex arctype behavior. Discrimination, in turn, is based on habit, a point which James did not sufficiently emphasize. And what is true of discrimination will also hold for attention (as well as the will and...
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belief, since each, for James, is a way of attending. Dewey also cites James's account of interest – the linchpin of his psychology and the basis of his later pragmatism. "Officially he assumes interest to be mentalistic. What he actually says about it is most readily understood in terms of the selection by motor factors in behavior" (LW, 14:160).

James did not treat sensations or impressions as physiological processes, but he should have, since he allowed for them to occur unnoticed (LW, 14:159). [Herein Dewey overlooks James's introduction of secondary selves to whom these sensations are consciously present.] An indication of just how desperate Dewey is to show that sensations really are physiological for James is that he offers on page 160 two allegedly corroborating quotations from Principles that do no such thing.

Dewey also appeals to James's example of "Baby's first sensation" in which there is no distinction between the mental and the physical, it being the entire world to the baby, as containing the germ of James's later theory of neutral entities.

The direct empirical meaning of neutral in this connection would seem to be that of indifference to the distinction between subjective and objective, this distinction arising when the proper guidance of behavior requires that we be able to tell whether a given sound or color is a sign of an environing object or of some process within the organism. Unfortunately his later writings seem at times to give the impression that these entities are a kind of stuff out of which both the subjective and objective are made – instead of the distinction being a question of the kind of an object to which a quality is referred. [LW, 14:164]

Herein Dewey is amplifying on his 1907 "The Postulate of Immediate Empiricism," in which he gave his variant of James's 1904–5 doctrine of pure experience. It is interesting to note that Dewey's denial therein that immediate experience is "any aboriginal stuff out of which things are evolved" [MW, 3:166] is almost a direct quotation from James's claim in "Does Consciousness Exist?" that "I have now to say that there is no general stuff of which experience at large is made" (ERE, 14). James's denial seemingly contradicts his claims within the very same essay that "My thesis is that if we start with the supposition that there is only one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed, and if we call that stuff 'pure experience,' then knowing can easily be explained as a
particular sort of relation towards one another into which portions of pure experience may enter” (ERE, 4) and “But thoughts in the concrete are made of the same stuff as things are” (ERE, 19), as well as his identification of pure experience with “materia prima” in “The Place of Affectional Facts in a World of Pure Experience” (ERE, 69; see also 13 and 46). This characterization of pure experience as a kind of prime matter, no doubt, is what Dewey had in mind when he mockingly said in a letter to Bentley that “at times he [James] seems to mix his neutrals with a kind of jelly-like cosmic world-stuff of pure experience . . .” (Ratner and Altman 1964, 115).

I believe that the way to neutralize this surface inconsistency, which James himself saw but did not attempt to resolve, is to distinguish between metaphysical and empirical (or scientific) constituents. His prime matter is meant to be a metaphysical constituent of everything, which is consistent with his denial that there are any empirical or scientific entities, such as atoms, of which everything is composed.

Running throughout *Principles* is a kind of phenomenological materialism that reduces many psychic phenomena to physical sensations within the body. There is James’s famed theory of emotions as physiological sensations and, most noteworthy for Dewey, his phenomenological reduction of the spiritual self, that inner active self from whom feats and efforts seem to originate, to a collection of intra-cephalic sensations, and “what is further said about personal identity is consistent with this behavioral interpretation. The appropriations of the passing thought are ‘less to itself than to the most intimately felt part of its present Object, the body, and the central adjustments, which accompany the act of thinking, in the head’” (LW, 14:165–6). But, as T. L. S. Sprigge has perceptively pointed out, “James’s phenomenological materialism does not imply that the consciousness of these physical processes is itself a physical process in any ordinary sense. It claims rather that our mode of “being in the world” is through and through a physical one” (Sprigge 1993, 76).

It now will be shown that Dewey’s attempted ontological naturalizing of James fails to address the overall spookiness of *Principles*, as well as the extreme spookiness of *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and *A Pluralistic Universe*, in regard both to its metaphysics and treatment of important psychological topics, such as
the self and paranormal phenomena. The major causes of this failure are due to a total overlooking of the spooky parts of James’s metaphysics and psychology, and a failure to appreciate the restrictions James placed upon his materialistic claims. Dewey’s ignoring of this spookiness resembles a parent making a point not to notice a child’s unruly behavior, hoping thereby to help make it go away. There is some excuse for such omissions in essays that deal with some limited aspect of James’s philosophy, such as the 1908 “What Pragmatism Means by Practical” (MW, vol. 4) and the 1925 “The Development of American Pragmatism,” both of which zero in primarily on his pragmatic theory of meaning and truth, but none for the many articles that attempt a broad overview of his philosophy, most notably the two death notices in 1910, the 1920 China lecture on James (MW, vol. 12), and the two James’s centennial essays of 1942, “William James and the World Today” and “William James as Empiricist” (LW, vol. 15). More specifically, the following will be shown: (i) Far from adopting dualism in name only in Principles, he argues for its most virulent form, interactionism. (ii) A will-to-believe type justification is given for believing in contracausal spiritual acts of effort or attention. (iii) Paranormal phenomena, wherein he thought the future of psychology lay, pace Dewey’s speculations about how James would have subsequently rewritten his psychology, are given a spiritualistic explanation that lay the foundation for the subsequent enveloping world soul(s) ontology of Varieties and A Pluralistic Universe.

(i) For starters, James presents a proto-version of a conceptually based property objection argument for the nonidentity of consciousness with any physical goings-on. “Everyone admits the entire incommensurability of feeling as such with material motion as such. ‘A motion became a feeling!’—no phrase that our lips can frame is so devoid of apprehensible meaning” (PP, 1:149). It looks like he is arguing for the nonidentity of the mental and physical on the basis of their necessarily not having all their properties in common, assuming, as would James, the indiscernibility of identicals.

Chapter 5, attacking “The Automaton-Theory,” is an extended metaphysical defense of an interactionist sort of dualism. The following is an argument for the causal efficaciousness of consciousness based on evolutionary success.
the study \emph{a posteriori} of the \emph{distribution} of consciousness shows it to be exactly such as we might expect in an organ added for the sake of steering a nervous system grown too complex to regulate itself. The conclusion that it is useful is, after all this, quite justifiable. But, if it is useful, it must be so through its causal efficaciousness, and the automaton-theory must succumb to the theory of common-sense. \cite{PP, 1:147}

(ii) Throughout his adult life, James ardently believed in the Libertarian doctrine of free will, replete with its contracausal spiritual efforts. It was this belief that sustained him through his emotional crises by enabling him to lead the morally strenuous life. Dewey completely ignores James's passionate defenses of this doctrine in the chapters on "Attention" and "Will." Instead, he zeroes in exclusively on James's phenomenological reduction of the active self to a collection of intracephalic sensations.\footnote{The cornerstone of his despookification of James is James's claim that the "Self of selves," when carefully examined, is found to consist mainly of the collection of these peculiar motions in the head or between the head and throat . . . it would follow that our entire feeling of spiritual activity, or what commonly passes by that name, is really a feeling of bodily activities whose exact nature is by most men overlooked. \cite{PP, 1:288}}

What Dewey fails to realize is that James's identification of the active self with these physical sensations is restricted to phenomenological appearances. At the beginning of his analysis James makes this restriction manifest when he says "Now, let us try to settle for ourselves as definitely as we can, just how this central nucleus of the Self may feel, no matter whether it be a spiritual substance or only a delusive word." There are several other places in \textit{Principles} where James makes tough-minded claims but restricts them to a certain interest or perspective \cite[see \textit{PP, 1:33 and 2:1179}]. In the chapter on "The Perception of Reality" James develops a radically relativized account of reality according to which something is real only in relation to or \emph{qua} someone's interest in a certain "world," such as the world of commonsense objects, the theoretical entities of science, fictional realms, Platonic abstracta, and so on. He is a veritable Poobah, the character in the \textit{Mikado} who held all the offices of state and always spoke \emph{qua} this or that official, only for James it is \emph{qua} this interest or that. It is "\emph{qua}"-clauses all the way on down until
James gets to the content of mystical experiences, for which unrestricted reality claims are made.

Dewey deliberately overlooked certain passages in *Principles*, primarily in the interconnected chapters on “Attention” and “Will.” Basically, volition is nothing but attention to an idea. Belief, in turn, is a state in which an idea fills consciousness without competitors, with the consequence that, in certain cases, we can believe at will or voluntarily, as is required by his will-to-believe doctrine, with its option to believe a proposition. For James, all actions initially are involuntary. In some cases a sensory idea of the motion or its immediate effects is formed. This creates a neural pathway from the brain to the concerned motor organ so that now mere consciousness of this idea causes the action. In the simplest cases, that of the “ideo-motor” will, there is no fiat or effort. But human beings quickly become more complex so that for many ideas they might entertain there is a competing idea which blocks its motor discharge. Such a case of conflict sets the stage for an occurrence of an effort to attend to one of these competing ideas so that it alone will fill consciousness for a sufficient time with sufficient intensity and thereby lead to its motor discharge. This effort to attend is the voluntary will.

“The essential achievement of the will . . . when it is most ‘voluntary,’ is to ATTEND to a difficult object and hold it fast before the mind. The so-doing is the fiat; and it is a mere physiological incident that when the object is thus attended to, immediate motor consequences should ensue” (*PP*, 2:1166).

James assumes that it is causally determined both which ideas enter consciousness and whether an effort is made to attend to one of them to the exclusion of its competitors. The question of all questions for James is whether the amount of this effort to attend also is causally determined, our answer determining “the very hinge on which our picture of the world shall swing from materialism, fatalism, monism, towards spiritualism, freedom, pluralism, – or else the other way” (*PP*, 1:424). The reason is that the amount of this effort, especially in cases in which we try to resist acting in the course of least resistance, can be the decisive factor in determining which idea emerges victorious and thus what action ensues, which, in turn, can have momentous consequences. It is only “the effort to attend, not to the mere attending, that we are seriously tempted to ascribe spontaneous power. We think we can make more of it if we
will; and the amount which we make does not seem a fixed function of the ideas themselves, as it would necessarily have to be if our effort were an effect and not a spiritual force” [426–7].

James characterizes this spiritual force as an “original force” and the “star performer” (PP, 1:428). To be an original force, for James, it must be an irreducibly conscious event that is not causally determined. After giving a very fair and forceful exposition of the “effect theory” of the amount of the effort to attend, according to which it is only a causally determined effect of physiological events, he expresses his personal preference for the “cause-theory.” “The reader will please observe that I am saying all that can possibly be said in favor of the effect-theory, since, inclining as I do myself to the cause-theory, I do not want to undervalue the enemy” (424–5). The basis of his preference is “ethical,” since “the whole feeling of reality, the whole sting and excitement of our voluntary life, depends on our sense that in it things are really being decided from one moment to another, and that it is not the dull rattling off of a chain that was forged innumerable ages ago” [429].

James’s version of libertarianism is far superior to that of others, from Aristotle down through Sartre and Chisholm, for he alone gives a detailed, close-up picture of just how free will works. What is distinctive about his version is that the immediate effect of a free volition, the amount of the effort to attend, is the sustaining and intensifying of an idea in consciousness rather than a bodily movement, as in Aristotle’s example of the stick moves the stone, the hand moves the stick, and the man moves his hand. There is reason to think that this approach might have these two further advantages over its competitors, which, surprisingly, have not been mentioned by either James or his expositors. First, it avoids troublesome questions about backward causation, for when Aristotle’s man freely moves his hand, he brings about earlier events along the efferent nerves linking his brain with his hand. (By clenching my fist I ripple my forearm muscles.) Second, it gives some hope of escaping a violation of the conservation of angular momentum, since its immediate effect, being the strengthening of an idea in consciousness, does not involve an acceleration, as happens when the man moves his hand.

James sets up a will-to-believe option, as already developed in his 1878 “Some Reflections on the Subjective Method,” to justify belief in the reality of such contracausal spiritual acts of attention. One
has such a right or permission to believe when the proposition in question cannot be determined on intellectual or epistemic grounds and by believing it one helps to bring about some morally or even prudentially desirable state of affairs.4

That the amount of these efforts to attend against the course of least resistance, such as in a case of moral temptation, are causally undetermined cannot be epistemically determined, since we cannot make sufficiently fine-grained measurements of brain events so as to discover whether the effect-theory is true. "The feeling of effort certainly may be an inert accompaniment and not the active element which it seems. No measurements are as yet performed [it is safe to say none ever will be performed] which can show that it contributes energy to the result" (PP, 1:428).

Thus, "The last word of psychology here is ignorance, for the 'forces' engaged are certainly too delicate and numerous to be followed in detail" (PP, 1:429).

When it comes to what good is realized by someone of a similar psychological constitution as himself believing in the cause-theory of the will, he comes across like an itinerant New England preacher intent on saving our souls, which is what he essentially was. Our very sense of our own self-worth as persons and ability to function as moral agents depends on this belief, since "the effort seems to belong to an altogether different realm, as if it were the substantive thing which we are, and those ['our strength and our intelligence, our wealth and even our good luck'] were but externals which we carry" (PP, 2:1181). James extolls the stoical hero who, regardless of external deterrents, can still find life meaningful "by pure inward willingness to take the world with those deterrent objects there" (1181). "The world thus finds in the heroic man its worthy match and mate; and the effort which he is able to put forth to hold himself erect and keep his heart unshaken is the direct measure of his worth and function in the game of human life" (1181). This sets the stage for the eloquent concluding paragraph of the section on free will.

Thus not only our morality but our religion, so far as the latter is deliberate, depend on the effort which we can make. "Will you or won't you have it so!" is the most probing question we are ever asked; we are asked it every hour of the day, and about the largest as well as the smallest, the most theoretical as well as the most practical, things. We answer by consents or non-consents and not by words. What wonder that these dumb responses
should seem our deepest organ of communication with the nature of things! What wonder if the effort demanded by them be the measure of our worth as men! What wonder if the amount which we accord of it be the one strictly undervived and original contribution which we make to the world! (*PP*, 2:1182)

Here is the passionate, existential James, and it is a source of amazement how Dewey could have completely overlooked it in all his many expositions of James’s philosophy, and in particular when he claimed that *Principles* was dualistic only in terminology. Whereas the active, inner self, *qua* phenomenological object, is nothing but cephalic sensations, as Dewey was right to point out, *qua* metaphysical entity required for being a morally responsible agent, it is a “spiritual force” that is the “substantive thing which we are” (*PP*, 2:1181). And which perspective we adopt is to be decided in terms of the moral benefits that accrue.

(iii) Paranormal phenomena consisting of insane delusions, alternating selves, and mediumship are given prominence in *Principles*. In his later works James developed a panpsychical metaphysical theory to explain these phenomena, along with mystical and conversion experiences. It really is a unifying inference to the best explanation that postulates a mother-sea of consciousness, of which there might be more than one, that is revealed in these exceptional experiences. In the 1898 lecture on “Human Immortality” it is said that in veridical mediumship contact is made with conscious states in a transcendental world, and all that is needed is an abnormal lowering of the brain-threshold to let them through. In cases of conversion, in providential leadings, sudden mental healings, etc., it seems to the subjects themselves of the experience as if a power from without, quite different from the ordinary action of senses or of the sense-led mind, came into their life, as if the latter suddenly opened into that greater life in which it has its source. . . . All such experiences, quite paradoxical and meaningless on the production-theory [according to which consciousness is causally dependent upon brain events], fall very naturally into place on the other theory [that the brain merely is a filter through which consciousness passes and gets focused]. We need only suppose the continuity of our consciousness with a mother-sea, to allow for exceptional waves occasionally pouring over the dam. (*ERM*, 93–4)

This mother-sea of consciousness theory becomes dominant in his most mature work, wherein it is given a panpsychical twist. In the “Conclusions” to *A Pluralistic Universe* he writes:
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... 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. ... The analogies with ordinary psychology, with certain facts of pathology, with those of psychical research ... and with those of religious experience establish, when taken together, a decidedly formidable probability in favor of a general view of the world almost identical with Fechner’s. (140)

The same Fechnerian mother-sea(s) theory informs the 1909 “Confidences of a Psychical Researcher.”

... we with our lives are like islands in the sea ... there is a continuum of cosmic consciousness, against which our individuality builds but accidental fences, and into which our several minds plunge as into a mother-sea or reservoir. Our ‘normal’ consciousness is circumscribed for adaptation to our external earthly environment, but the fence is weak in spots, and fitful influences from beyond leak in, showing the otherwise unverifiable common connexion. Not only psychic research, but metaphysical philosophy and speculative biology are led in their own ways to look with favor on some such ‘panpsychic’ view of the universe as this. (EPR, 374)

The 1902 Varieties also appeals to this theory to explain what is revealed by mystical and conversion experiences. James develops a perceptual model of mystical experience according to which, when veridical, they are direct apprehensions of this surrounding sea of consciousness. They are “windows through which the mind looks out upon a more extensive and inclusive world” (339). In conversion experiences this subliminal or transmarginal consciousness is a medium through which the divine consciousness in this more extensive and inclusive world salvifically flows into the subject. In general, the religious life shows “That the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance” (382). It supports Fechner’s theory of successively larger enveloping spheres of conscious life ... the tenderer parts of his personal life are 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 ... we inhabit an invisible spiritual environment from which help comes, our soul being mysteriously one with a larger soul whose instruments we are. (PU, 139)

It is very difficult to the point of being impossible to treat the mother-sea of consciousness and our variegated experiences of it as
neutral experiences – as neither physical nor mental simpliciter, counting as one or the other only when placed in a series of surrounding experiences, a mental series, unlike a physical one, being one in which the content of the successive experiences are not nomically connectible. It is for this reason that Dewey’s beloved neutrals of James’s 1904–5 essays have become the spiritual denizens of a panpsychical pluralistic universe. Even in these essays there are hints of panpsychism, as for example when he deals with the problem posed by unperceived events future. His way out of the difficulty seems to go the panpsychic route because he says of them that “If not a future experience of our own or a present one of our neighbor, it must be . . . an experience for itself. . . . ,” thereby imputing an inner consciousness to every physical event (ERE, 43). Viewed in its historical setting, the phenomenological neutrals of 1904–5, although apparently materialism friendly, really are a trojan horse gift, for, unbeknownst to Dewey and his cohorts, it is only veridical sense perceptions that qualify as ontologically neutral, and not the motley crew of religious and paranormal experiences that James, in his extreme radical empiricism, also counted as cognitive.

Not only does Dewey overlook all of the spookiness of the post-*Principles* writings, he even overlooks their presence in *Principles* itself. Everything within the James corpus makes an appearance in *Principles*, even the theories of the mother-sea of consciousness and the brain as a filter through which this flows. James asks in *Principles* what “more” the soul is than just a succession of Thoughts. His reply: “For my own part I confess that the moment I become metaphysical and try to define the more, I find the notion of some sort of an *anima mundi* thinking in all of us to be a more promising hypothesis, in spite of all its difficulties, than that of a lot of absolutely individual souls” (328). This “anima mundi,” which becomes Fechner’s mother-sea of consciousness in his later writings, is implicitly appealed to when he says that “the perfect object of belief would be a God or ‘Soul of the World,’ represented both optimistically and morally . . . and withal so definitely conceived as to show why our phenomenal experiences should be sent to us by Him in just the very way in which they come” (944–5). The filtration-theory is hinted at by his remark that
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the brain is an instrument of possibilities, but of no certainties. But the consciousness, with its own ends present to it, and knowing also well which possibilities lead thereto and which away, will, if endowed with causal efficacy, reinforce the favorable possibilities and repress the unfavorable or indifferent ones. The nerve-currents, coursing through the cells and fibres, must in this case be supposed strengthened by the fact of their awakening one consciousness and dampened by awakening another. (144-5)

II METHODOLOGICAL NATURALISM

Throughout Principles, James employs a dual method for investigating a psychic phenomenon, one based on an introspective "analysis" of what it is like to experience it, the other, the "historical" method, a third-person based description of its publicly observable causes. "There are, as we know, two ways of studying every psychic state. First, the way of analysis. What does it consist in? What is its inner nature? Of what sort of mind-stuff is it composed? Second, the way of history. What are its conditions of production, and its connection with other facts?" (2:913).

While Dewey praises James's introspective analyses as an advancement beyond those given by the rationalists and empiricists because it alone recognizes relations as given, he downplays its centrality and wishes that James would completely jettison it in favor of the "outer" causal approach, as is required by Dewey's methodological naturalism.

An example of Dewey's downplaying the importance of introspection to James is the remark in his 1920 China lecture on Bergson that whereas Bergson assigned a major role to introspection James did not (MW, 12:21). Another example is Dewey's claim that "The work of James replaces a dialectic analysis of experience with one based upon scientific knowledge . . . ," which omits mention of James's reliance on introspection. One of the tricks Dewey used to downplay James's reliance on introspection is to convert his introspective analyses into something else, a good example of which is Dewey's construal of James's analysis of connections in the 1942 "William James and the World Today." When Dewey wrote this he was preoccupied with the challenge to democracy posed by totalitarianism to show how a society can be both unified and yet contain genuine
individuals. Dewey finds a solution in James’s “each-form” analysis in *A Pluralistic Universe* – that immediately conjoined neighbors, be it in space or time, interpenetrate and melt into each other but without losing their own identity, as is seen by the fact that this melting or fusing relation is not transitive. [If you don’t understand this, then you understand it, since it is a mystical doctrine.] These “confluence” relations can unify a society, because even if two persons are not directly connected by such a relation they are indirectly connected by a chain of such relations (*LW*, 15:5–6). Dewey’s deployment of James’s each-form analysis, though brilliant in its own right, fails to note that James’s analysis, in spite of his use of the metaphor of a “federal republic” for his pluralistic world (*PU*, 145), was not a political but a phenomenological one. It is an attempt to improve on *Principles*’s specious present phenomenological description of our experience of change, according to which each pulse of sensory experience has a temporally extended content of distinct successive events, with a Bergsonian analysis that fuses them into a cotton-candyish glop.

Because Dewey held that philosophical theories ultimately were sociopolitical in origin and intent, he might have believed that he was well within his rights to politicize James’s phenomenological description of the flow of experience. In his 1904 graduation address at the University of Vermont he said:

> It is today generally recognized that systems of philosophy however abstract in conception and technical exposition lie, after all, much nearer the heart of social, and of national, life than superficially appears . . . philosophy is a language in which the deepest social problems and aspirations of a given time and a given people are expressed in intellectual and impersonal symbols. (*MW*, 3:73)

Dewey’s metaphilosophical thesis faces a counterexample in James’s Bergsonian account of change. Dewey, after correctly pointing out that Bergson’s “intuition” of the “duree” is a form of mysticism, accounts for this mystical strain in terms of Bergson being a Jew from Alexandria, a crossroads for mystical cultures (*MW*, 12:227). But James’s description of change is, according to James himself, identical with Bergson’s, and thus every bit as mystical. Are we to infer that James was Jewish and reared in an area that is a fleshpot of mysticism! James’s rival sentiment-of-rationality metaphilosophical thesis, that
one's philosophy is an expression of psychological predilections, seems far more in agreement with the empirical facts. The mystical mindset knows no sociopolitical boundaries.

Rather than being a fifth wheel, introspection is accorded pride of place in James's existentially oriented philosophy. Even before James came out explicitly for panpsychism in his final years, there is a desperate effort, such as is found in many of the essays in the 1897 The Will to Believe and especially in “On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings,” to penetrate to the inner life of everything. Whereas Dewey viewed the other person primarily as a co-worker in a co-operative venture to realize some shared goal, James wanted to “I-Thou” this person, in fact the universe at large. In A Pluralistic Universe he even speaks of penetrating by an act of “intuitive sympathy” to “the inner life of the flux,” to “the inner nature of reality” – “what really makes it go.” A Pluralistic Universe is a plea for a philosophy of “intimacy” according to which “The inner life of things must be substantially akin anyhow to the tenderer parts of man’s nature.”

How does this quest to penetrate to the inners of things pertain to James's attachment to introspection? The use of it does not per se commit one to a mental/physical dualism, no less panpsychism; recall James's phenomenological materialism about the active self and the emotions in this regard. However, if one already believed that everything had an inner conscious life that gave value and meaning to its existence, as did James, then pride of place would be given to the introspective method. For through its use we can discover in our own case what it is like to enjoy or be some quality or thing, which then can be projected on to others via an act of “intuitive sympathy,” sometimes buttressed, as it was for James, by a Cartesian type of analogical argument. The great attraction of introspective analysis for James is that it afforded him a way of preventing the bifurcation of man and nature, which is his ultimate enemy because it strips the world of any human meaning or value.

These existential themes clearly emerge in James's treatment of the identity of the self over time, another part of James that Dewey totally ignores. His analysis is exclusively introspective, thereby assuring that our concept of what we are will have the required intimacy, given that what we are, our nature, is tied to our identity conditions. It is given exclusively in terms of first-person criteria –
states of consciousness that are introspectively available to the subject. This approach fits his antibifurcationist demand because it is based on what is important to us as emotional and active beings. It is just such considerations of importance that form the underlying leitmotif of James's analysis of the self.

This "inner" approach to understanding the identity of persons contrasts with the "outer" objective approach that treats persons as what could be called in a somewhat extended sense of the term a "natural kind," meaning a type of object whose nature is to be determined through natural science. It was suggested that Dewey's scientism places him squarely within the natural kind camp. These contrasting approaches are at the foundation of the split in twentieth-century philosophy between so-called continental and analytic philosophy. They also form the basis of James's contrast between the tough- and tender-minded given in *Pragmatism* [13]. The traits listed under "The Tender-Minded," for the most part, are those that assure an unbifurcated world and are vouchsafed through the inner approach, as contrasted with those listed under "The Tough-Minded," which represent the natural scientist's temper of mind, with its scientistic natural kinds approach to understanding the nature of persons and their world.

James's analysis is patterned after Locke's and holds that successive thoughts are co-personal just in case the later one "appropriates," that is, judges, the former to be its own on the basis of its having a special sort of warmth and intimacy. While James alludes at a couple of places to third-person criteria that could challenge or defeat a judgment of self-identity over time based on these sort of apparent memories, the only defeater he seems to recognize is the existence of a better or equally good claimant, someone else whose apparent memories are more or just as rich and coherent and also match some real life person's past. James's version of a memory-theory of personal endurance treats persons as nonnatural kinds, since it includes no causal requirement for memory. "The same brain may subserve many conscious selves, either alternate or coexisting..." [379], thus permitting persons to switch bodies à la Locke's prince and cobbler. This is the single most important feature of his analysis and sharply distinguishes it from natural kind memory theories that treat memory as a causal process that is ultimately to be understood by natural science.
James’s chapter on “Memory” is placed six chapters later than the one in which he gives an introspective analysis of personal endurance. He follows his usual pattern of first giving an introspective analysis, followed by an historical or causal one. After repeating his introspective analysis from the earlier chapter, he presents a straightforward neurophysiological analysis of the causes of memory. “Whatever accidental cue may turn this tendency [to recall] into an actuality, the permanent ground of the tendency itself lies in the organized neural paths by which the cue calls up the experience... the condition which makes it possible at all... is... the brain-paths which associate the experience with the occasion and cue of recall” [PP, 2:616].

You would think that this physicalist, natural kind account of memory would supply third-person criteria for defeating introspectively based memory claims and the claims of personal endurance that they carry. Such claims could be defeated by showing that the right sort of physical process does not connect the apparent memory with the past event. But James never places any causal requirement on memory. The turkey is on the table and all carved. All he has to do is sit down and eat. But he doesn’t, thus following the nonnatural kind approach to the nature of the Self.

It is reported that in 1905 James and Dewey sat over a Ouija board together [Dearborn 1988, 95]. If the general thesis of this paper is correct—that Dewey’s philosophy is naturalistic all the way on down and James’s spooky all the way on up—Dewey must have had a big smirk on his face while the sweat of earnest conviction was pouring off James’s.

NOTES

1 Reprinted in John Dewey, The Later Works, vol. 14 [Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988]. All references will be to the pagination in this volume and will appear in the body of the paper. All references to Dewey will be to this press’s editions and will use the following system of abbreviations: EW, MW, and LW standing respectively for Early, Middle, and Later Works, to be followed by the volume and page number.

2 This essay later appears as chapter 1 of The Meaning of Truth. Reference is to page 32 of that volume.

3 This oversight in his 1940 essay is especially surprising since in his 1897
"The Psychology of Effort," Dewey recognized that James’s account of the will is “spiritual” with respect to moral effort; but, even then, he tries to finesse James into the naturalist camp by pointing out that this ought not to be his considered position since it is inconsistent with James’s claim that his sensationalizing of emotions did not detract from their spiritual significance (EW, 5:149).

4 For a full account see Gale 1991, chapter 9.

5 Strange to say, even James himself overlooks it at times, as for example when he made this disclaimer in his 1904 “The Experience of Activity”: “I have found myself more than once accused in print of being the assertor of a metaphysical principle of activity. Since literary misunderstandings retard the settlement of problems, I should like to say that such an interpretation of the pages I have published on effort and on will is absolutely foreign to what I meant to express. . . . Single clauses in my writing, or sentences read out of their connexion, may possibly have been compatible with a transphenomenal principle of energy, but I defy anyone to show a single sentence which, taken with its context, should be naturally held to advocate such a view” [ERE, 93]. The sentences that have just been quoted from Principles on effort as an “original spiritual force” more than meet James’s challenge. It might be conjectured that the reason for James going back on his “metaphysical” account of the will in Principles is that he wanted to impress the “brethren” in the American Psychological Association, to whom his 1904 address was given, that he was as tough-minded as they.

6 See ERE, 38 for James’s presentation of the analogical argument for other minds; and for his commitment to a private language, a presupposition of this argument, see PP, i:40 and SPP, 57.

7 Because of space limitations, my account necessarily is very sketchy. For all the details see Gale 1994.