

On the Intrinsic Nature of States of Consciousness: A Thesis of Neutral Monism Considered

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The general problem as to the intrinsic nature of the states of consciousness is what these are in themselves, what intrinsic properties they have as the occurrences that they are. William James later holds them to be “pure experiences”; they are intrinsically neutral, not mental or physical, though they are commonly taken as such. This is part of a major ontological revision of James’s well-known earlier approach, since he now holds everything extant is pure experience. In “Does Consciousness Exist?” — on which my article focuses — James applies his new approach to the topic of consciousness, and he proposes that this amounts to the function of knowing, which pure experiences instantiate with respect to other pure experiences, erroneously taking the latter to be as they are not: subjective (i.e., states of consciousness) or objective (i.e., something external to the stream of consciousness) depending upon a context of associated experiences. Their intrinsic properties are held not to be mental or physical or any combination of such; and James seems to want to conceive of pure experiences as lacking in every property, except as they are interpreted at the moment, or in retrospect, in terms of a group of experiences to which they belong. James’s revised account of the states of consciousness is closely considered in the present article, his new account is contrasted with the one which he advocated in *The Principles*, and objections are here developed to the thesis that the states of consciousness are actually pure experiences.

The general problem of the intrinsic nature of the states of consciousness is what these states *are in themselves*. The problem is not what they are *about*, or may appear to be about, not what it is they give or seem to give *awareness of*. The problem is what *intrinsic* properties they possess as the occurrences that they are.

Three Different Conceptions of the States of Consciousness

A Physical-Monist Conception

Consider my own conception of the states of consciousness, which I believe to be the case in the absence of any more compelling theory of them. My conception is not well worked out, and many people are dubious about it as it stands, but it would seem to be closer to the truth than any dualist account that maintains the mental consists of something nonphysical. Psychologists may well characterize my conception as “a working hypothesis,” but my conviction as to the nature of the consciousness states is too strong for such a mild, interim characterization. Indeed, it would take more than just pragmatic reasons to cause me to give it up. I feel certain that consciousness states are *occurrent brain states* (Natsoulas, 1987; Sperry, 1969, 1980), notwithstanding the fact that, as they occur, I have awareness of some of them *from the inside*, as other people do in their own instance. Those who would argue this access from the inside rules out consciousness states’ being states of the brain must explain, to convince me otherwise, *what it is such inner awareness depends on that the brain cannot provide*. Before joining a rush to judgment contra the physical — whose intrinsic nature keeps amazing us as physical science discovers more and more about it — recall *how little is known as yet about the brain*, not to mention the basic properties belonging to matter in general. Indeed, it may well be our deep ignorance of *the physical world* that enables many of us to insist that states of consciousness are alien to it (cf. Natsoulas, 1987, pp. 18–19).

Moreover, according to my conception (Natsoulas, 2004), some of the consciousness states have each *their own self* as object, along with, in myriad cases, another one or more intentional objects. That is, a state of consciousness of the sort I am now referring to apprehends *itself* along with whatever else it may apprehend. And, whatever may be the number of its objects, they are all objects of the same, single, *unitary awareness*, thus, not the objects of two or more *separate* acts somehow instantiated by a single state of consciousness. Nevertheless, I do not accept that this reflexive feature — or, for that matter, *any* awareness feature of *any* state of consciousness — entails its not being an occurrent brain state or its having some first-person, subjective feature that is not identical to a third-person, objective feature of the occurrent brain state which the state of consciousness is (Natsoulas, 1995; Searle, 1992). About my proposed intrinsic self-awareness of *some* consciousness states, let me add this before I proceed: a consciousness state’s qualifying as such is a matter of its intrinsic nature, but not all such states possess a nature that includes self-apprehension. My view is *not* that all of the states of consciousness that take place involve — or are accompanied by — awareness of them. Thus, some states of consciousness take place “in the dark”: in the

sense that, from the first-person perspective, their occurrence is *as though they did not exist* — although I do not intend by this that *effects* of theirs may not be objects of firsthand awareness, nor that their occurrences may not be *inferable* from something else which one does have awareness of.

William James's "Neutral" Conception, Contrasted with His Earlier Dualist View

Consider, also, two other examples of conceptions of the states of consciousness. These are basically different from my own, and can be found expressed in the writings of William James at different points in his career (1890/1950, 1904/1912). James vigorously argued for one of them in *The Principles of Psychology*; and, fourteen years later, he argued in favor of the other. Both of his conceptions are of *the individual states constituting the stream of one's experience*, one state following directly upon the preceding one for as long as that stream extends without interruption. And if another such stream that, together with the first, goes on in the one person, that stream too consists of such states, as James conceived of them. James's two accounts of the consciousness states contrast with the physical monism that I espouse and that identifies states of consciousness with certain brain occurrences, admittedly unknown at this time.

According to James's first conception, the states of consciousness are *mental*, they possess a *nonphysical* nature, although he claimed them to be *direct products* of the total brain process or a substantial part thereof. As this completely physical process goes on, it brings one consciousness state after another into fleeting existence. But, it would be a mistake to understand these states to be (occurrent) parts of that or any other such process. Each of them is, James held, a thoroughly mental process despite their physiological source and their capacity to affect the course taken by the brain process that effected them. Perhaps it would be better to say, on James's behalf, that the brain process *evokes* rather than *produces* the respective consciousness states, since he proposed that the latter are not made up of the same "stuff" as their proximate physical causes are.

In James's (1904/1912) later view, the consciousness states are conceived of as instances of something called "pure experience." One might say they are all *made* of pure experience except such a statement invites the difficult question (see below) of *what pure experience itself consists*. In any case, pure experiences are proposed to be, as it were, intrinsically *neutral*; that is, they are in themselves *neither mental nor physical*; they are merely *taken* to be either one or the other, as I shall explain and examine here (cf. Natsoulas, 2003–2004). This conception belongs to James's late career; it abandons *The Principles'* dualist interactionism of the mental and the physical; and it amounts to a *major ontological revision of the earlier approach*.

That my latter characterization is justified can be seen, for example, from the answer James gave to an objection that he expected his new conception would draw. Here is my statement of that objection:

Accordingly, someone will likely contend as follows: "Neutral and simple 'pure experience' is something we know not at all," and "It must consist of something." James has not said of what his pure experiences are *made*, but he must tell us since they are mysteriously claimed to be neither of a mental nor of a physical nature. What extra kind of occurrence has James's labor of thought managed to bring into the world?

His new major claim may remind one of present-day physicists' announcements that there exists *throughout* the universe some previously unknown property or constituent. Although it may not always come to mind, what these scientists mean to refer to, includes perforce what we ourselves are, *our own constitution*. If what physics says is true, it applies as well to us, who too are proper parts of this universe.

The following is how James replied in anticipation to the question *what his pure experiences are made of*:

Although for fluency's sake I myself spoke early in this article of a stuff of pure experience, I have now to say that there is no general stuff of which experience at large is made. There are as many stuffs as there are "natures" in the things experienced. If you ask what any one bit of pure experience is made of, the answer is always the same: "It is made of that, of just what appears, of space, of intensity, of flatness, brownness, heaviness, or what not." . . . Experience is only a collective name for all these sensible natures, and save for time and space (and, if you like, for "being") there appears no universal element of which all things are made. (James, 1904/1912, pp. 25–26)

James is here stating: *an experience consists of precisely those features which the things that are therein experienced appear to have*. That those features seem to belong, rather, to environmental things, not to our experiences seemingly of those things, is a *systematic illusion*. The latter term is an allusion to Wilfrid Sellars's "Foundations for a Metaphysics of Pure Process" (1981), which includes the claim that our perceptions involve the *illusion* that what we are perceiving are parts of the environment. What we do perceive is *always*, in Sellars's view, something much closer to us: sensory states transpiring in a portion of our brain he calls "the sensorium." Accordingly, *that which one takes* in perceiving is always one's own sensory states, and *what they are taken as* are environmental objects that one believes oneself to be perceiving. In every case of any purported environmental awareness, one automatically *mistakes* the sensory states for that which exists in the environment and is reliably producing them in one's sensorium.

A systematic illusion exists in our experience, according as well to James (1904/1912). For example, the complex intentional object of which your experience at this moment is making you aware, is not what it appears to you

so vividly and insistently and usefully to be. Your intentional object is not "a collection of physical things cut out from an environing world of other physical things with which these physical things have actual or potential relations" (p. 11). Whether or not the environing world exists, one normally takes oneself to have perceptual awareness of it, which qualifies as systematically illusory since, as a matter of fact, it is *only of experiences* that one has awareness. Thus, James's second conception of the states of consciousness proposes a *theoretical relocation inward*, of the surround you seem to be aware of as existing outside your experiences. In contrast, *The Principles* distinguished *the knowing from the known* and held this distinction to be an essential feature of "the psychologist's attitude towards cognition," and to be of importance to what James would express in his book. That which is perceptually known, is not itself any part of the inner occurrence of knowing. Though, in James's new account, the distinction remains at work between knowing and known, it pertains strictly to *a relation between experiences* that are components of the same stream. It is only experiences that are ever known, and they are known only in the way of *inner awareness*, an experience's access to another, preceding experience. *The Principles* considered the items that are perceptually experienced not to be experiences, but now James theoretically understands those items to be one and the same as the experiencing of them, and known in roughly the same way as the states of consciousness were earlier said to be known, through a further experience directed on the first, thus by inner awareness.

James in *The Principles* had adopted the perspective of the psychologist and, therefore, had rejected the equivalence of any state of consciousness to its objects, whether a set of these or any one of them. Allowing that a psychologist as metaphysician may harbor a monistic philosophy in this regard, James as psychologist was required to maintain: an object that exists externally to the brain "must strike the brain in some way, as well as be there, to be known," this cognition taking place "altogether in the mind" and requiring *a new construction* occur there (1890/1950, p. 216). Of the latter event, the abbreviated version of his masterwork states it to be a definite happening; and "a genuine glimpse into what [that happening] is" would render "pale" in comparison all of our past scientific achievements (James, 1892/1984, p. 401). Evidently, James (1904/1912) later believed that he achieved a genuine glimpse into what the consciousness states are. He declared them to be bits of a certain mysterious pure experience irreducible to something mental, physical, or a combination thereof. Somehow, he had managed to get a glimpse of the reality that underlies the appearances, though, from what he said that pure experiences are made of, this reality would seem to amount to *the very appearances themselves*.

Attempted Inroads from the First-Person Perspective

In a past article (Natsoulas, 2001), with the same main title which I have given to the present article, I sought to make some inroads from the first-person perspective, upon the intrinsic nature of the consciousness states. I addressed the feature of *synchronic unity* that belongs to each state of consciousness that is a basic durational component of the stream as the latter was conceived of by James in both *The Principles* and subsequently (e.g., 1899/1925) — although not as late as in “Does ‘Consciousness’ Exist?” (henceforth: “DCE”; James, 1904/1912), where a major revision concerning the nature of those basic durational components is expressed. Based on my physical-monist view of consciousness states, here is how, in an earlier article, I justified the approach to them that I was taking:

Every true statement about a state of consciousness that we may succeed in formulating is a statement about an occurrence in the brain. And it is well worth it for us to try to say about such states as much as possible that has a good chance to be true Description of states of consciousness as they seem firsthand is worth our effort also because such description can serve to guide us in the search for the intrinsic nature of states of consciousness as physical states. If a scientist (e.g., Weiskrantz, 1997; Natsoulas, 1999a) is looking for such states in the brain, the more he or she already knows about them, the better the chances of finding them among all of the many other kinds of brain states that are not states of consciousness. It would be most unwise for us to turn our backs on the special access that we have to our states of consciousness because this access may involve error. Every way in which we learn about reality is susceptible to error yet we have not ceased to distinguish between the illusory and the real. Nor will we ever cease to distinguish between them notwithstanding our periodic fits of skepticism. (Natsoulas, 2001, p. 230; cf. James, 1902/1982, p. 499)

DCE strives to express the actual place of consciousness in the world: “There is . . . no aboriginal stuff or quality of being, contrasted with that of which material objects are made, out of which our thoughts of them are made” (James, 1904/1912, p. 3). DCE is a metaphysical effort, not just a phenomenological one. James reconstructs his famous states of consciousness of 1890 — not to mention, as well, all else that exists — into the pure experiences mentioned above. The states of consciousness are, in James’s new conception, neither physical nor mental. Their nature is of a neutral kind that we take in one way or the other of these two latter ways, *depending upon their context of other states of consciousness*.

It may seem somewhat misleading for me to speak of the pure experiences as being identical to the states of consciousness, given the associations that the latter term tends to evoke, owing to James’s famous earlier conception of them. But, I claim every bit of Jamesian pure experience is: none other than a consciousness state, which is an occurrence in the brain. While James proposes a state of consciousness is a bit of pure experience, I suggest the *refer-*

ents-in-fact of both *stream of consciousness* and *pure experience* are identical to each other. I do not see the new bits of pure experience are anything but the old consciousness states now conceived of differently. Compare with two individuals who are speaking about the contents of a certain test tube but in so different a way from each other that one wonders if it is the same material they are speaking about, which in fact it is. James is a master of the phenomenological, even admired for his phenomenological descriptions by the philosophical school of phenomenology. And, in DCE and other publications, the topic of consciousness still is James's major concern. Indeed, near the beginning of DCE, he explains that, though he has for seven years or more suggested to his students that consciousness "as an entity" does not exist, he has simultaneously "tried to give them its pragmatic equivalent in realities of experience" (James, 1904/ 1912, p. 3). These include that experiences certainly do exist and they perform *the function of knowing*. Thus, whereas the states of consciousness are not to be conceived of as previously, *they remain for James essential to every awareness we have of anything*.

Therefore, in my continued effort to make inroads from the first-person perspective upon the intrinsic nature of the consciousness states, it should prove helpful to take notice of and consider how James employs what he apprehends firsthand of his pure experiences in arguing, as he does, that they are neither mental or physical, and that they constitute the ultimate reality lying beyond the construal of them as thoughts or things. One can learn much from colleagues with whom one disagrees. Submitting their accounts to close scrutiny is compatible with a philosophy of science that conceives of psychology, and all of science, as progressing by tentative and revisable steps. For it would not be science were one to presume already to know the outcome that investigation would bring. Moreover, presumption may well distort investigation, in the form of, for example, the suppression of unwanted results, and the discontinuation of trials that fail to conform to one's expectations. Temptations to show that one is right abound these days, probably more than they did earlier. It is reasonable to wonder how much selection of results is now transpiring in fields that forcefully advertise themselves as scientific. And, of course, close study of an author's work with whom one is in basic disagreement can serve to counteract tendencies to ignore what is out of step with the prevailing fashions.

In the rest of this article, I shall continue to speak of *states of consciousness*, just as I have in previous articles that bear the same main title and treat of the same problem, namely, the intrinsic nature of such states (Natsoulas, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002). For I am certain that it is the states of consciousness, no matter how James is conceiving of them, that remain his referents in fact. It is his own states of consciousness he consults in making phenomenological points, when he tries to tell us, on an empirical basis, what properties

experiences have. For example, he reports that a bit of experience appears to be a case of knowing or, alternatively, something nonexperiential that is known depending on whether the bit of experience is taken in the context of one or another kind of experience set. One imagines (a) James's undergoing awareness of his states of consciousness as they stream by, (b) his finding a particular consciousness state to be nonmental, environmental even, and (c) his noticing that the factor determining how he takes that state, to be how the states of consciousness surrounding it are taken. (One wonders what determines how they are taken.) So, too, one recalls, from James's Epilogue to the abbreviated *Principles*, a comment of his that presages what he will maintain in DCE a dozen years later:

The world first exists, and then the states of mind; and these gain a cognizance of the world which gets gradually more and more complete. But it is hard to carry through this simple dualism, for idealistic reflections will intrude. Take the states of mind called pure sensations (so far as such may exist), that for example of *blue*, which we may get from looking into the zenith on a clear day. Is the blue a determination of the feeling itself, or of its "object"? Shall we describe the experience as a quality of our feeling or as our feeling of a quality? . . . The fact is that such an experience as *blue*, as it is immediately given, can only be called by some such neutral name as that *phenomenon*. It does not come to us *immediately* as a relation between two realities, one mental and one physical. It is only when, still thinking of it as the *same* blue . . . , we trace relations between it and other things, that it doubles itself, so to speak, and develops in two directions; and, taken in connection with some associates, figures as a physical quality, whilst with others it figures as a feeling in the mind. (James, 1892/1984, p. 496)

This seems to suggest that the *taking* of an experience as physical or as mental, occurs *in our thought* about the experience, not *in how the experience comes immediately to us*. I shall need to inquire into how pure experiences do come to James (1904/1912), what their properties are that, as it were, they wear on their sleeves for him. How they come in the first place, must surely be a good part of his basis in reaching the radical interpretation of the states of consciousness as being pure experiences, as opposed to what he previously took them to be.

James's above construal of how an experience of a blue sky comes to one, is not compelling. The sky, which we experience as blue, is not an object of inner awareness but an object of visual-perceptual awareness. However illusory a perceptual object the sky is, its blueness appears to be there, in space, where the sky appears to be, at a distance from our experience of it, not to exist in our stream of consciousness but externally to it. The blue appears to be a property that the sky is instantiating. While it may be argued that the blue is a quality of one's experience, rather than its belonging to something of which one is perceptually aware, it would have to be argued based on considerations *pertaining to whether the sky exists*, not from how the experience comes to us that is as though of the sky.

In *The Principles*, James claimed *no one has ever had a simple sensation*: “Consciousness from our natal day is of a teeming multiplicity of objects and relations” (p. 224). It is indicative that James in his Epilogue (indented quote just above), to make his point as to how experiences come to us, uses the dubious example of a simple sensation. Other examples would surely have made it difficult for him to claim the apparent properties of the world beyond experience come to us in the first place *neutral* with respect to what they belong to. They come to us, rather, as being instantiated by items existing externally to the stream of experience *and* as being experienced as such. Or so it seems; there will be more about this soon in the present article.

Regarding the Term *Consciousness*

In James's (1904/1912) estimation, the development of thought about consciousness among philosophers and psychologists had reached a point where the term seemed to have reference to something “of which in its own right nothing can be said” (p. 2). This was James's stated reason for desiring to eliminate the concept of consciousness. That is, it had “evaporated to the estate of pure diaphaneity” (p. 2). James would not have turned to pure experiences unless he believed the same *could not be correctly said* of pure experiences as he was saying of consciousness. His new concept of pure experience must include some general specifications of those events to which his use of it would have reference.

Indeed, James determines, presumably through his inner awareness of his pure experiences, that “there is a function in experience which thoughts perform, and for the performance of which this quality of being is invoked. That function is *knowing*” (pp. 3–4). In the case of the kind of simple sensation James had earlier referred to, there exists *not only a quality of blue but, also, an experiencing of blue* in which there is an apprehension of the blue's presence. In James's earlier conception, this function of awareness was carried out by thoughts, in contrast to things; it was states of consciousness that were the occurrences wherein things and other consciousness states were apprehended. And it is now pure experiences that are proposed to perform this function.

James is clearly not ready to consider illusory the function of knowing, although one might expect that he would find the existence of this function to be problematic to his wish to eliminate the mental along with the physical. For it could be objected: thoughts and things cannot both be reduced to pure experiences because it is *only thoughts* (i.e., states of consciousness) that possess the property of awareness. James implicitly deals with this objection by explaining that knowing — which, presumably, we know of directly — is a certain kind of relation which exists between experiences; thus, one part of the stream of pure experience “becomes the subject or bearer of the knowl-

edge, the knower, [an]other [portion] becomes the object known" (p. 4). He considers this explanation to flow readily from his thesis that *everything extant is composed of the same "stuff," namely, of pure experience*, but he admits: to make the latter understandable requires more work. We must inquire into whether the objection I just mentioned can be successfully treated of along the lines James indicated.

James appends, in DCE, a footnote that cites *The Principles*: where he had argued that *aside from the passing state of consciousness, no knower exists*. He meant by this that the function of knowing is a certain operation belonging *not to an ego* but to a consciousness state, directed on something else, which can be another state of consciousness or something outside the stream of consciousness. Now he proposes that knowing is a relational feature belonging to an experience directed on another experience. Neither later nor earlier did James posit some kind of a distinct entity that does the knowing. The knower is always an experience or state of consciousness. This reference of James's to his past theorizing has the effect of reminding us that, in *The Principles*, he proposed *meaningful things about* the states of consciousness; he did not treat of them there as diaphanous unknowns. A state of consciousness was proposed to be, a single, unitary awareness with typically a complex of intentional objects, many of these existing externally to the stream of which the particular state is a component.

As mentioned, I am continuing to speak of the consciousness stream although James in DCE holds that what really flows within us is a stream of pure experience; and, often, we erroneously take it to be a stream of consciousness in his sense at work in *The Principles*. His descriptions in DCE of the bits or portions of pure experience are worth study in a series of articles, such as this one, that addresses what the intrinsic properties of the consciousness states are. In fact, James's descriptions in DCE, whether they are accurate or not, are attempted descriptions of the states of consciousness; indeed, I would propose they are the same occurrences (brain occurrences, in my view) that he is describing both in *The Principles* and in DCE, where he claims they are neither mental or physical.

Rejection of the Inner Duplicity of States of Consciousness

James begins the main part of DCE (see his section II) with consideration of a certain thesis that is frequently encountered in the publications of theorists who concern themselves with states of consciousness. They propose that each such state possesses two basic parts or aspects. James speaks of their general view as being that the consciousness states have a "dualistic constitution," though he does not mean to say that, according to their conception,

the states are partly mental and partly physical, or that the states instantiate both mental and physical properties. Rather, they have another kind of “dualism” in mind, namely, that, in each state of consciousness, two factors are distinguishable: the one factor is the being conscious (or, in my term, aware) of something or other; the other factor is the something or other of which there is consciousness (or awareness) therein.

The Diaphaneity of Moore’s Sensory State

In preparation for discussion of this thesis, James furnishes quotations from the writings of three theorists. Among these three is G.E. Moore, whose observations about the diaphanous and yet distinguishable character of the first factor are well known. However, as I elsewhere discuss (Natsoulas, 1999b, pp. 273–275), Moore (1903/1922) *does not hold the second factor to be a part of the consciousness state itself*; for Moore, a consciousness state is not “duplicitous,” in James’s sense as James draws a contrast to his own monistic view.

The particular states of consciousness to which Moore is referring are sensory states, and he emphasizes that for him to undergo such a state is

to know something which is as truly and really *not* a part of my experience, as anything which I can ever know “Blue” is as much an object, and as little a mere content, of my experience, when I experience it, as the most exalted and independent real thing of which I am ever aware. (Moore, 1903/1922, p. 27)

With regard to Moore’s inner awareness of the diaphaneity of his sensory state — that is, of his sensory awareness, not of its object the blue — I suggest he perforce finds his sensory state to be transparent *because the state is not an object of a further sensory state* (Natsoulas, 1999b). I should add the following (cf. Natsoulas, 2004):

If the inner awareness involved, which has the sensory state as its object, is intrinsic to the state, rather than a distinct, further mental-occurrence instance, it would not mean that the sensory state itself is apprehended in the way the blue is; as David Woodruff Smith (1989) argues, not all of what a state of consciousness gives awareness of, is qualitatively present therein; for example, a state of consciousness that includes awareness of itself would not be a case of its reflexively seeing itself, not even if the state is a visual perceptual experience.

Moore does not get mentioned in DCE again, but James (1904/1912, p. 9) soon summarizes his own considered judgment of the duplicity thesis with italicized words: “*Experience . . . has no such inner duplicity; and the separation of it into consciousness and content comes, not by way of subtraction, but by way*

of addition." He interprets the kind of view he rejects as holding that we distinguish between the states and their contents by a kind of *subtraction*, which presumably occurs as a consciousness state takes place and we apprehend its occurrence. He states that we do so distinguish by mentally setting the contents aside and noticing the consciousness which is left. And there is thus felt to be occurring in us an "impalpable inner flowing," which is quite distinct from the contents that too are instantiated by the succession of states of consciousness (cf. James, 1890/1950, p. 297).

In implicit contradiction of *The Principles*, for James a state of consciousness is no longer *in itself* an awareness, a knowing, nor is it a content of awareness, a thing known. *In itself*, a state of consciousness is *neither* subjective *nor* objective, yet we are justified to speak of it in these ways owing to its external relations. A pure experience, James's conceptual replacement for a state of consciousness, is considered a knowing because of *how it is related* to other pure experiences.

Preliminary Comments on the Knowing and the Known

Here is how James expresses this point, followed by a number of preliminary comments of mine concerning his proposal. James (1904/1912) explains the "addition" that he mentions in the statement I just quoted from him, as being

the addition, to a given concrete piece of [experience], of other sets of experiences, in connection with which severally its use or function may be of two different kinds A given undivided portion of experience, taken in one context of associates, play[s] the part of knower, of a state of mind, of "consciousness"; while in a different context the same undivided bit of experience plays the part of a thing known, of an objective "content." In a word, in one group it figures as a thought, in another group as a thing. And, since it can figure in both groups simultaneously we have every right to speak of it as subjective and objective both at once [The dualism of thought and thing] is an affair of relations, it falls outside, not inside, the single experience considered, and can always be particularized and defined. (pp. 9-10)

1. The notion of a single concrete piece of experience, or state of consciousness, as having two different kinds of use or function, would seem to have intended reference to *what is possible* for an experience, not to a *necessary* fact about it. An experience may have "added" to it one or another set of other experiences or *nothing at all*. James distinguishes two sorts of sets that may be "added," and the kind that is "added," in his view, determines the use or function of the piece of experience, of that state of consciousness. But an experience can also take place *without any operation carried out with it or upon it*.

2. What is it for a certain experience to have a set of experiences "added" to it? James does not continue with the metaphor of "addition" in this con-

text. Instead, he continues his discussion in terms of how the experience is *taken*, what its *context* of other experiences is, and the kind of other experiences that are its *associates*. It is by an experience's being taken in a certain context of associates, that the experience is said to "play its part," that is, to perform a function, or be put to a use. The taking of an experience in some way, follows the experience's occurrence; and any function or use an experience may have, presumably follows its being taken in some way.

3. What is it for an experience to be *taken* in a certain way? It would seem the taking of an experience in one way or another, requires its being an object of awareness, something known of firsthand. What else could James mean? Would anything at all (e.g., a taking of it) be possible with respect to an experience, if inner awareness of it were totally absent? I should think not; an experience whereof there is no awareness, is not an experience that is taken in any way. Nor can it be put to use. Nor does it perform any function. To be simply an experience, one in a series of experiences none of which has the experience for its object, is for the experience not to play any part, or so it would seem.

4. My interpretation of James in the just preceding point presents a problem. I suggest there that, for an experience to be "taken," the inner-awareness function is necessary, but it is James's view that inner awareness is *a relation between experiences*. That is, we know of the occurrence of particular experiences of ours if there transpire in us experiences having those experiences as their objects. For that is how James comprehends the function of knowing, in all of its instances. It follows: whichever taking occurs of an experience, not only does another experience perform that taking, but, also, this further experience is *not* one that itself has been already taken in some way.

5. The function of knowing or awareness, by one experience of another experience, is not dependent, as it were, on interpretation; as I see it, awareness is pre-interpretatively intrinsic to the experience that is the knower. Awareness's being intrinsic to the experience means, contrary to James, the experience's function of knowing does not "fall outside" the experience but inside it. Insistence, instead, that the inner-awareness function of an experience depends upon how the experience is related to yet another experience, which takes and knows it in turn, would seem to start a regress. For the same question arises concerning the experience that knows it, and thereby enables it to be a knowing of the experience that is its own object.

6. Given my above understanding, what should be made of James's statement, in the above quoted passage, that an experience *may simultaneously belong to two contexts of associates* and justifiably be considered, therefore, both objective and subjective? One may want to dispute his statement along the following lines:

A particular experience only takes place in a single context of associates, that is, whatever the context may be in which it takes place; and it has only whatever associates it has there, in the context in which it occurs, not associates belonging to other segments of the stream of experience, or to any other stream of experience.

However, the meaning of James's statement that an experience may belong to two contexts of associates, may be (a) that the entire group of experiences is construed together in a certain way as the group is occurring, and (b) that there may occur a complex construal of them together, that is, a simultaneous double construal of the group as a whole, all of them as both "objective" and "subjective." One might put it that the activity of introspecting the stream of experience proceeds under the influence of an objective attitude or of a subjective attitude, or of a certain combination of these two attitudes that has the consequence of each experience's being taken as both a state of consciousness and something existing beyond the consciousness stream.

7. Alternatively, an experience is called "objective" whenever it belongs to a set consisting of experiences considered to be things; it is called "subjective" if it belongs to a set considered to be thoughts. Which one of these terms applies, objective or subjective or both, does not depend, in any instance, on whether the experience takes place in a stream consisting of experiences that already belong to one of these two sets, the other, or both, but depends on an interpretation that is carried out in retrospect upon the experience and its context of experiences, after the considered experiences have all taken place.

The Reader's Own Visual-Perceptual Experience of the Surrounding Room

His new account of *what a consciousness state is*, James (1904/1912) asserts, is "verifiable and concrete," especially as compared to conceptions that attribute content and awareness to the intrinsic nature of a consciousness state. This advantage derives, he argues, from *externalization* of the two dimensions said to belong to each experience on its own, treating of its content and its awareness feature as both of them being, rather, *relational* between experiences.

As one might expect James calls his reader's attention to phenomenology as he is making his case against the inner duplicity of a state of consciousness. James asks the reader "to take" his or her own experiences in order "to see" what James means, what he is proposing is the case for the individual experiences. From this, one anticipates James will put to use an empirical procedure to show his new conception's superiority.

In the following terms, James (1904/1912) specifies the particular experiences, or states of consciousness, that he asks his reader to consider.

Let him begin with a perceptual experience, the "presentation," so called, of a physical object, his actual field of vision, the room he sits in, with the book he is reading as its centre; and let him for the present treat this complex object in the commonsense way as being "really" what it seems to be, namely, a collection of physical things cut out from an environing world of other physical things with which these physical things have actual or potential relations. (p. 11)

The Principles treats of this kind of experience as being a state of consciousness that may also be simultaneously, for example, an auditory and a kinaesthetic experience. This consciousness state would not be constituted of the occurrence of the three experiences in a series, one after another, or in parallel, side by side. Notwithstanding the state's being an instance of three different kinds of experience, the state would be a single, unitary awareness, albeit with an even more complex intentional object than James describes above.

Moreover, according to *The Principles*, this consciousness state — as is the case for all other states of consciousness — would be distinct from its complex object, including every feature or part thereof. Its complex object would not include the consciousness state itself; the state could not be, according to James, an awareness of itself. Its complex object would be all of that which is *known* in this unitary instance of awareness, and the consciousness state would be a *knowing*, which never has any awareness of itself. The stream of consciousness would proceed in "total darkness" should none of its component states be an inner awareness, perforce of another one of these. A stream of consciousness proceeds in the "light" to the degree that its component states, one or more, are objects of inner awareness.

Thus, at the same time, a state of consciousness such as the one serving here as our example, may be, according to *The Principles*, an (inner) awareness of another state of consciousness that belongs to the same stream. A state of consciousness even as complex as our example could be as well an inner awareness, although not of itself. But being an inner awareness would not make it any less of a distinct state, no less distinct than from the states of consciousness not among its intentional objects. James argues: any firsthand awareness of a consciousness state requires that the apprehended state be followed in the same stream by a distinct state that has the apprehended state among its intentional objects (Natsoulas, 1995–1996, 1996–1997).

What is James asking of his readers in the sentence quoted above from page 11 of DCE? He obviously wants them to look around the room in which they are now sitting and to have visual-perceptual awareness of the room and of some of the objects that are present in the room. Also, the reader will likely undergo thereby, awareness of what, for me, is *something further*, namely, those experiences that are parts and products of the visual-perceptual activity of looking round the room (cf. Gibson, 1979/1986, p. 196). For me,

as for James of *The Principles*, these visual-perceptual experiences are distinct from the room and from its contents that lie externally to the readers' respective streams of consciousness.

Evidently, James does not propose to use his readers' introspective findings as evidence for his new conception of the consciousness states. Rather, James expects that what the readers find will be helpful to them in grasping what he is now claiming regarding the states of consciousness that is inconsistent with what his readers would consider to be evident firsthand. We are correctly told the following about the evidence that is provided to the readers by their inner awareness. The reader finds, for one thing, that visual-perceptual experience of room and book involves "no intervening mental image"; the reader "seems to see the room and book immediately just as they physically exist" (James, 1904/1912, p. 12). About the same kind of experience, as it seems from the first-person perspective, James (1890/1950) states that "almost anyone" will affirm he or she "can feel, alongside the thing known, the thought [e.g., visual experience] of it going on as an altogether separate act and operation in the mind" (p. 297). I believe these statements of James's, though well separated in time, are not incompatible efforts to say how it seems to have visual-perceptual experience of an environmental object; thus, not in either statement is a phenomenal object introduced that is distinct from the external object itself, no phenomenal room that is not identical to the room in which the reader sits; and this intentional object's perceived properties are seen by the reader to belong to it and not to the experience of it.

James's Explanation of His Readers' Experiences

However, in DCE, James chooses to explain these appearances rather than to consider them as evidence regarding the intrinsic features of states of consciousness. Thus, directly upon calling his readers' attention to their perceptual experiencing of the room, James, from the perspective of his revised conception, pronounces as follows about that experiencing: "Now at the same time it is just *those self-same things* which his mind, as we say, perceives" (p. 11). Contrary to what the readers find firsthand, James declares that it is *the perceptual experience itself* which they in fact perceive.

James would seem to be abandoning the psychological for the metaphysical; recall what he wrote about psychology in *The Principles*:

Introspective Observation is what we have to rely on first and foremost and always. The word introspection need hardly be defined — it means, of course, the looking into our own minds and reporting what we there discover. Every one agrees that we there discover states of consciousness. So far as I know, the existence of such states has never been doubted by any critic, however sceptical in other respects he may have been. That we have cogitations of some sort is the inconcussum in a world most of whose other facts

have at some time tottered in the breath of philosophic doubt. All people unhesitatingly believe that they feel themselves thinking, and that they distinguish the mental state as an inward activity or passion, from all the objects with which it may cognitively deal. *I regard this belief as the most fundamental of all the postulates of Psychology, and shall discard all curious inquiries about its certainty as too metaphysical for the scope of this book.* (p. 185; original italics)

In contrast, James in DCE asks the reader to believe that the things that, on a firsthand basis, he or she is sure to be perceiving, are other than they seem; they are in themselves experiences, and they are this *whatever and however they may seem*, as naively distinguished from experiences by inner awareness.

James proffers an explanation for its seeming otherwise to the reader. One who insists he or she is aware of the room in which he or she sits, has in fact awareness of a pure experience, and this awareness is part of a process that connects the apprehended experience with a certain group of its associates. Absent this process or the occurrence instead of a process connecting the pure experience with associates of a certain different sort, the conviction would not arise that what the reader is experiencing is something external to the stream of experience.

If no process takes place that associates the experience with other experiences, it still can be an object of knowing; but, in such cases, the experience is apprehended as a mere *that*; in other words, it is therein undecided as to *what* it is one is apprehending. This pre-interpretative grasp might be said to be “neutral”; it does not take the experience for anything else; nor, presumably, does it take it for *anything at all*, not even the pure experience James claims it is. Without being interpreted as belonging to a certain context of associates, it cannot be apprehended to be of such and such a nature, it would seem, whatever its intrinsic nature may be.

Consider three additional things James (1904/1912) says concerning what the reader would quite comfortably call “visual-perceptual experience of this room.” The statements below appear in his account of what one can be accurately aware of by turning one’s attention to one’s visual-perceptual experience of the room, but James does not bring out his statements’ implications that pertain to *what the nature of the experience is however it may be taken*.

1. “The experience is a member of diverse processes that can be followed away from it along entirely different lines” (p. 12). This statement of James’s would seem to be about the experience in itself, as well as the processes to which it is said to belong. Whereas two (or more) processes can be “followed away” from the experience, that is, one or another of its associated experiences can be taken notice of, the experience too is itself described as being a “member” of both of the “processes.” Similarly, just before this statement, James writes of the experience that it occurs at the “intersection” of processes that connect the experience, respectively, with a different group of its associ-

ates. These two connections, it would seem, make possible the experience's being taken as an object in the environment or as a state of consciousness, neither of which it actually is. And the connections are owed to the experience's being part of each of the two processes; being such a part of one or more processes would seem to be an aspect of the experience's intrinsic nature.

2. "The one self-identical thing has so many different relations to the rest of experience that you can take it in disparate systems of association, and treat it as belonging with opposite contexts" (pp. 12–13). You become aware of the experience *and* of certain of its relations, which are to other experiences of which you are aware, *and* you come to classify it to be mental (state of consciousness) or physical (outer object) depending on the relations apprehended, or, perhaps, on those of them apprehended that seem relevant to the interpretation. The statement that I just quoted asserts, *inter alia*, that an experience is *such* as to stand in many relations to experiences in the same stream. For example, from the first-person perspective, there are bases in *experience* itself for comparing experiences to each other. If indeed one experience bears upon what another experience is taken as, the first experience cannot be merely a *that*. It would seem that intrinsic properties enable an experience to stand in certain relations to other experiences. That is, one's pure experience, in itself, makes it possible to take it to belong to one or another context, based on certain of the relations in which it stands.

3. When the reader interprets firsthand an experience, in either of the two opposite ways, the experience "enters both contexts in its wholeness, giving no pretext for being said to attach itself to consciousness by one of its parts or aspects, and to outer reality by another" (p. 13). It would seem from this statement of James's that the reader's pre-interpretative apprehension of his or her experience is of a sort that does not distinguish or fasten upon parts or aspects of the experience; rather, the basis for the reader's interpretation of the experience, as what it is, are the relations of the experience *as a whole* to some other experiences. The experience is apprehended to belong to one or another group of associates *in its entirety*. However, in order for the experience to be not only in fact related to other experiences in certain ways, not only to stand in fact to them in these relations, but also to have these factual relations taken notice of, there must be apprehension of features of each of them that account for their being terms in the respective relation. A relation between one "that" and another "that" can be noticed only if they are distinguishably different in some respect, and features of theirs are apprehended. As I examine James's further discussion, I shall be giving some additional attention to my three, tentative critical points just presented.

Identifying them as two different sort of "histories," James discusses *what the two processes are* that perceptual experience of the room enters into "in its wholeness." They are "the reader's personal history" and "the history of the

house of which the room is a part." It is not difficult to understand perceptual experiences to be basic durational components of the reader's experience stream that extends from the past and into the future. They belong to a part of the reader's personal history that consists *inter alia* of "sensations, emotions, decisions, movements, classifications, [and] expectations." James employs the term "inner operations" to refer to items which comprise this history, but he places quotes around the word *inner*, presumably owing to his conception of the pure experiences as neither inner nor outer except as they are interpreted. Curiously, when he describes the relation of the experiences to the room wherein they occur, he does not also place quotes around the word *physical*, as he explains that the very same pure experience (i.e., any one of the above) is also

the *terminus ad quem* of a lot of previous physical operations, carpentering, papering, furnishing, warming, etc., and the *terminus a quo* of a lot of future ones, in which it will be concerned when undergoing the destiny of a physical room. (James, 1904/1912, p. 14)

Thus, James appears to be proposing that both physical and mental operations exist, and that the reader's visual-perceptual experience of the room is an operation that belongs to both of these groups of operations. *How* can it belong to both groups? Is it not mental as opposed to physical? Are not the properties of the mentioned mental operations incompatible with the properties of the mentioned physical operations? Is not the reader's perceptual experience of the room different in many ways from those physical operations responsible for the room's existence and condition at present? At this point, James himself provides an important list of ways wherein the room and the experience of it are *different*. These are differences that one can reasonably employ to argue that *it would be a mistake to consider experience to belong to both groups of operations*. James presents these differences, however, as owed to how the experience is taken: if you take it as a subjective state, that is, as belonging to a series of mental operations, then it will seem to possess properties incompatible with those it seems to possess if you take the experience as the room you are sitting in.

Application to "Conceptual" Experiences

James believes that his reader will find plausible the explanation he has proffered; for he has adequately explained the reader's firsthand awareness which distinguishes between the room and any experience of it — though, on James's view, these are one and the same. So far, "all seems plain sailing" to James; and, so, he can go on to apply the same "law" to experiences that are not perceptual: to "conceptual manifolds, or memories, or fancies." These

“conceptual” experiences — James’s term for the second sort of experience he discusses — are also bits of pure experience and related to groups of associates; and one can take such conceptual experiences too as external objects or as states of consciousness, depending upon the context of their associates one follows to interpret them. James (1904/1912) declares that the conceptual experiences, too, “act in one context as objects, and in another context figure as mental states” (p. 15). In addition (as will be seen below), the conceptual experiences may be taken to “represent” associates of theirs that are perceptual-experiential and taken in the one way or the other.

I asked earlier how, in the first place, pure experiences come to us, according to James, how they are for us *prior* to the interpretations we assign to them. A small part of a reply is provided when James speaks at this point of their lack of order, their coming “as a chaos of experiences.” This chaos is proposed to be the case for all of our experiences, not just the ones which he calls conceptual. We might have learned something about the intrinsic nature of a pure experience if James had told us how one bit of experience is discriminated from the rest of the stream of which it is a basic durational component. How is it picked out for the purpose of interpretation? What is there about a bit of experience that enables its selection for this purpose? Is there anything one notices about it besides its being the experience of the moment? But, James provides no way to understand how what is next accomplished emerges out of the experiential chaos. He just states that “lines of order soon get traced,” and goes on to say, again, that we find any bit of experience to be connected with distinct groups of experiential associates which “link themselves with it by different relations.”

A footnote James appends to the latter statement informs us (a) that, here and elsewhere, he has *experienced* relations in mind, and (b) that these relations are no less “members of the same originally chaotic manifold of non-perceptual experiences of which the related terms themselves are parts” (James, 1904/1912, p. 16). Among these relations are ones that link an experience to associates of it in a way that the experience appears to be a state of consciousness; others of these relations make of the respective experience a part of the environment or a part of another world: logical, mathematical, or otherwise “ideal.” At least two comments are needed here.

1. James wants to make it clear that the experienced relations to which he has reference are not *merely objects* of pure experience; they are *not mere products of interpretation*. The relations themselves *actually exist, no less than do the experiences that instantiate them by their standing to each other in relation*. The relations are properties of that which makes up the basic process of experiential flow, before any interpretation transpires owing to a further process — which is a continuation of that flow — of taking bits of experience to be this or that. It would seem that the experienced relations should be contrasted

with relations *merely taken* to be there in the process of interpreting experiences to be what they are not. For example, two objects in the environment are occurrently believed to be spatially related in a certain way to each other though, in fact, they consist of pure experiences, which do not instantiate spatial relations.

2. The associates of a pure experience, to which it is connected by virtue of their being parts of a single process, are themselves pure experiences and they make up, as does the experience of interest, the stream of experience. This is a fact concerning experience, not a matter of how one interprets one's experiences. The stream of experience is not a product of interpretation — as the stream of consciousness is now said by James to be; the latter stream is illusory in that it actually consists of pure experience that is, according to James, nonphysical and nonmental. To say that it is not mental is not to say what one has inner awareness of is not an experience stream. The latter is exactly what it is, but taken for something else, either a part of an objective world or a part of a subjective world, neither of which exists.

James anticipates the reader will have difficulty seeing that, like the perceptual experiences, the conceptual experiences are taken as objective, as well as taken as subjective. This difficulty arises from the fact that many conceptual experiences have a certain special relation to certain of the other experiences in the same stream. James speaks of the latter experiences as a third group of associates, the other two groups being related to a particular conceptual experience in such a way that enables taking the experience for a consciousness state or for something objective. The third group consists of "percepts" and are so related to conceptual experiences that they are taken to be represented by conceptual experiences. This experienced relation is a relation of aboutness, an experience's being about another experience, as though they are a thought and a thing thought of. James (1904/1912) is explicit as to the problem aboutness makes for acceptance of his account:

We treat them [certain conceptual experiences], "knowing" percepts as they do, as through and through subjective, and say that they are wholly constituted of the stuff called consciousness using this term now for a kind of entity, after the fashion which I am seeking to refute. (p. 17)

It is interesting that this point comes up in James's discussion of the conceptual experiences. Could he not raise it, as I do in an earlier section of the present article, with respect to the relation of a perceptual experience to the environmental object that is its object? In being about it, does not the experience differ in its intrinsic character from its object, by being a knowing, in James's term, as distinct from that which is thereby known. My point does not conflict with my physical monism. I am not proposing that a perceptual experience and its outer object are not both parts of the physical world. I am

objecting to their identification with each other as the same experience, or as both being experiences.

However, James in DCE sets percepts aside, and what the experienced relation of aboutness to them implies for his account's acceptability. Instead, he quotes from Hugo Münsterberg a full page in which Münsterberg argues that the objects of thought can be just as real and external to the stream of consciousness as the objects that are perceived. Neither kind of object is "hidden inside" the perceiver or thinker, neither kind is a consciousness state. James quotes Münsterberg not in order to agree with him regarding the latter, but to demonstrate the comparability between the objects of perception and the objects of thought.

Thus, although James grants the phenomenological validity of Münsterberg's description, he returns to his main point, that both the perceived room and recollected room are experiences that "double-up" for external objects based upon a certain group of their associated experiences. This group consists of other experiences that, on the basis of experiences associated with them in turn, are taken for objective things.

Concluding Comments

The remainder of DCE consists of some additional sentences pertinent to the nature of pure experience and James's answers to five objections that he anticipates will be brought against his new conception. I discuss those replies elsewhere (Natsoulas, 2005–2006). Here, I am concluding with those sentences of James's that I just mentioned, along with some commentary of mine on them.

The instant field of the present is at all times what I call the "pure" experience. It is only virtually or potentially either object or subject as yet. For the time being, it is plain, unqualified actuality, or existence, a simple *that*. In this *naïf* immediacy it is of course *valid*; it is *there*, we *act* upon it; and the doubling of it in retrospection into a state of mind and a reality intended thereby, is just one of the acts. The "state of mind," first treated explicitly as such in retrospection, will stand corrected or confirmed, and the retrospective experience in its turn will get a similar treatment; but the immediate experience in its passing is always "truth," practical truth, *something to act on*, at its own movement. If the world were then and there to go out like a candle, it would remain truth absolute and objective, for it would be "the last word," would have no critic, and no one would ever oppose the thought in it to the reality intended. (James, 1904/1912, pp. 23–24)

It would appear that a pure experience, or "the instant field of the present," is for James "a simple *that*" in the sense that any pure experience is both

- (a) an existent, or something which takes place, as I understand it, for a very brief duration and at a specific location, and
- (b) something which is, either actually or potentially, the intentional object of inner or immediate awareness.

Before it is classified as “object or subject” (i.e., objective or subjective), a pure experience must already be an object of awareness; it must actually be apprehended in order, then, to be taken in either way. A pure experience first comes and “for the time being” is no more than a *that*. By the latter, I understand James to mean that the pure experience on its arrival is, *for the individual whose it is*, a something there and as yet unqualified. James speaks of all pure experiences that come as being “valid” in their “*naïf immediacy*.” This statement, too, of James’s would seem to provide support for my understanding that, though a pure experience is subjectively unqualified, some awareness of it must be involved. How else is the notion of its “validity” and “immediacy” to be understood? However “unqualified” a pure experience which has come is said by James as yet to be, he must mean that the pure experience is “unqualified” *with respect to some awareness of it*.

Note too the following, which is also proposed in the indented quotation from DCE above in this section. Already, prior to any cognitive processing of it, a particular pure experience is such that one is in a position, not shared with respect to it by anyone else, to “act upon it.” The pure experience’s being “there” in the first place would seem not to be just a matter of its coming into existence in such a way that the one to whom it belongs is “blind” (my term) to the experience. Rather, the pure experience comes in a form that can be “acted upon,” and — I interpret — acted upon, in the sense that James means, not in retrospection only, but also “at its own [moment].” I replace *movement* in the latter phrase (see indented quotation above), because I believe the word *movement* is an error, and the word *moment* makes good Jamesian sense.

In the above indented quotation, James allows more ways for a pure experience to be acted upon than occurs in retrospection. No doubt, he means to include acts upon the pure experience that take place at its own moment, as well as acts that transpire later on with reference to it. Indeed, perhaps what occurs in retrospection depends on the pure experience’s being noticed in the first place, its having been already known in “plain, unqualified actuality” and as “something to act on.” Would retrospection be possible of a pure experience that, at its own moment, passed along unbeknownst?

In James’s conception, what is the meaning of *one’s acting upon, or on, a pure experience*? In using this phrase, James does not intend, it seems clear, any sort of manipulation of or change in the experience itself. For example, a pure experience is a pure experience however it happens to be taken. Indeed, it is already gone and has been replaced in the experience stream by another pure experience that qualifies as an act upon that prior experience.

Therefore, it would seem that a more exact phrase to employ to mean as James does is *one’s acting on the basis of, or based on, a pure experience*. That is, what one does depends, in some positive degree, on the pure experience that one has and acts upon. And this dependency is often not automatic but is

mediated by one's having firsthand awareness of that pure experience upon which one's act is based.

If what I am suggesting is correct from James's new perspective, then we would seem to be entitled to ask of James *what it is that one notices about a pure experience upon which an act is based?* A pure experience cannot be a mere that, or just something there, if one is to choose how to act based upon it. Noticeable differences between experiences must be present before acts of interpretation take place.

Before he begins replying to likely criticisms, James (1904/1912) summarizes his view with an italicized sentence, which I quote next. In place of the notions (a) consciousness connotes an external relation to existents that are not components of the stream of pure experience and (b) consciousness "denotes a special stuff or way of being," here is DCE's main proposal: "*The peculiarity of our experiences, that they not only are, but are known, which their 'conscious' quality is invoked to explain, is better explained by their relations — these relations themselves being experiences — to one another*" (p. 25).

However, if I am correct that noticeable differences between experiences must precede acts that are based upon them, then being aware of an experience is not merely a matter of its evoking an act or another experience that takes the first experience for this or that. Distinctive features of the first experience must exist so that the act of interpretation can have, as it were, something to go on. According to James, pure experiences are taken, for example, to be very specific objects belonging to the environment around us. This taking would seem to require more than something there to act on; namely, it must be a particular already intrinsically propertied something in order for it next to be judged as being this or that; however erroneous the judgments may be, they have to be based on something more than a "plain, unqualified actuality, or existence, a simple *that*" notwithstanding its inclusion in a stream of pure experiences, all of which James would describe with these same words.

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