

Furthermore, "few things elevate Don Quixote more than his disdain of worldly riches": Don Quixote is an example of poverty and purity of soul, because of "his spiritual childhood and his heroic innocence."⁴¹

Don Quixote regarded evil from the Jamesian perspective of healthy-mindedness, by which "evil means only a mal-adjustment to things, a wrong correspondence of one's life with the environment."⁴² Evil is a maladjustment between his imagined world and the real one. Don Quixote goes out to the real world willing to fulfil divine law. The two kinds of character in which James divides mankind (healthy-minded and sick souls) come together in Don Quixote. Indeed, Don Quixote healthy-minded respecting his conception of evil, but sick in soul, as he is one of those who must be born again to be happy. For this reason Cervantes's hero is reborn in his particular conversion from Alonso Quijano to Don Quixote. In this sense, Don Quixote is the quintessential hero. It can be said—in a Jamesian sense—that we find in Don Quixote all that we look for in a hero. We forgive all his weaknesses because of his courage and his willingness to risk his life, heroically defending the noble cause he has chosen. This is Don Quixote, this is the pragmatist hero.

⁴¹ M. de Unamuno: *Vida de Don Quijote y Sancho*. Madrid, Alianza, 1987, p. 57.

⁴² W. James: *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 114.

Sergio Franzese, Felicitas Kraemer (Dir.), *Fringes of Religious Experience, Cross-perspectives on William James's The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Francfort, Ontos Verlag, 2007.

A Chronicle of Pragmatism in France Before 1907. William James in Renouvier's *Critique Philosophique*.

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1. Reception and Distortion

What would be our understanding of Kant's philosophy if his *Critique of Pure Reason* had never been translated? If Spinoza's *Ethics* was still in Latin? There was, and there might still remain fine Kantian and Spinozist scholars; they might be aware of all the minute details of those systems, but the *general* reception of these two thinkers, the way their ideas are used in argumentation, would definitely be quite different. If these two questions must remain pure speculation, in this country at least, the case of James's work provides a concrete example of such a situation. Two major works by James have never been translated into French so far: (1) *The Principles of Psychology* (even if the briefer *Psychology* has been available since 1909),¹ and (2) the *Essays in Radical Empiricism*,² even though one of the key chapters, *La notion de conscience*, was written directly into French in 1905. Most of his works were not translated in full before the debate over pragmatism was over. This of course is not enough to explain the many misunderstandings James had to face, since most of the "misunderstanders" referred to in the *Meaning of truth* were English speakers, but this limited "availability" of James's texts played a major role in the *distortion* his pragmatism suffered in the first years of the XXth Century.

Max Fisch, in a fascinating paper entitled "American Pragmatism before and after 1898",³ described the way in which an average reader, having access to

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¹ W. James, *Précis De Psychologie*, Paris, M. Rivière, 1909. A new translation has been published recently: William James, *Précis De Psychologie*, Paris, Les empêcheurs de penser en rond, 2003. [Hereafter Pp]

² Since the present paper was submitted, a translation of the *Essays*, by the present writer and G. Garreta, was published: *Essais d'empirisme radical*, Agone, Marseille, 2005. [Hereafter ERE]

³ Max H. Fisch, "American Pragmatism before and after 1898," in Robert W. Shahan (Ed.), *American Philosophy from Edwards to Quine*, Univ of Oklahoma, Norman, 1977, pp. 78-110. Retrieved in Max H. Fisch, *Peirce, Semeiotic, and Pragmatism: Essays*, Bloomington,

fine libraries and bookstores, would get a rough idea of pragmatism before James's famous 1898 lecture. One of the results of the first section of this paper was to show how little the 1898 lecture added to James's previous statements. In the present paper, a similar task is taken up but with a different twist: many French readers thought they had sufficient evidence of James's thought, when he published his *Pragmatism*, and they read the later James through this lens. French readers were provided with James's works in a far different chronological order than that of their original publication.⁴ I am not claiming that this kind of "cinematic" effect is always decisive to understand James's philosophical insights in general, and I shall not enter here into what are the minimum materials to describe the "center" of one philosopher's vision, nevertheless, I think that this kind of details is crucial if we want to understand the philosophical *debates* and *polemics* which surrounded them. As early as 1908, James had to protect the pragmatic approach from "misunderstanders", and at least some of these misunderstandings have their origin in the kind of details we are investigating here.

A simple instance might help to substantiate this claim and to make clear what I call here a "distortion". It is often forgotten that most people first read what James had to say about pragmatism *not* in the 1898 Lecture, *Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results*, whose circulation was quite limited, but in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* in 1902⁵. This is a first important point: James's pragmatism seemed, to many readers, deeply connected with his approach to religious experience, *i.e.* with the import of the moral attributes on one's conduct of life, whereas the other methodological aspects of the pragmatic maxim—for example the pragmatic treatment of the "One and the Many"—were less prominent in 1902 than in the original lecture. Readers had to wait for the reprint of the 1898 Lecture in 1904, under the title "The Pragmatic method", and in *Pragmatism* in 1907, to have the complete picture. If one judges James's pragmatism only from the 1902 formulation, one might certainly have interesting things to say about belief and conduct, but I guess it is safe to say that one imposes a *distortion* on James's thought if his

Indiana University Press, 1986. My title is of course a reference to another excellent and very famous paper by M. Fisch, "A chronicle of Pragmaticism, 1865-1679," retrieved in the same collection, pp. 114-136.

⁴ *La théorie de l'émotion*, Alcan, Paris, 1903; *L'expérience religieuse* [=VRE], Alcan et Jüding, Paris, Genève, 1906; *Philosophie de l'expérience* [=PU], Flammarion, Paris, 1910; *Le pragmatisme* [=P], Flammarion, Paris, 1911; *L'idée de vérité* [=MT], Alcan, Paris, 1913; *Introduction à la philosophie* [=SPP], M. Rivière, Paris, 1914; *Aux étudiants. Causeries* [=TT, part. 2], Payot, Paris, 1914; *La volonté de croire* [=WB], Payot, Paris, 1916.

⁵ VRE, 1902, p. 444.

utterances are assessed only with the materials available in the *Varieties*. Thus, it should be remarked that I am using this term without implying that there is an "absolute" meaning or "univocity" to a particular philosophy: it is enough if we can show that some readers project the whole of a philosophy on a particular or minor occasion.

There are reasons to think that this is what happened here, on a larger scale. First, as in many countries, a lot of confusion was involved in all the quarrels over pragmatism. Useful information about this period is provided by the reports of the *Third Congress of Philosophy at Heidelberg* in 1908,⁶ where the writer complains that "a wave of pragmatism and humanism, coming from Anglo-Saxon countries, has kept sweeping this Congress."⁷ The last lines of this text give a sufficient idea of the general mood: "Instead of confining themselves to a few formulas which cannot even claim for them the faint glory of an antique tradition, the pragmatists should consider that, if war often leads thought to go to sleep, blows have never promoted an idea."⁸ The confusion between Schiller's, Papini's, and James's positions certainly did not help. But a decisive element needs to be taken into account, which helps to understand why James's position was generally construed from his early statements: James's *Pragmatism* was translated, with a foreword by Henri Bergson, only in 1911, *i.e.* after James's death, and also at a time when the debate over pragmatism was a little less vivid. Before 1907, most of James's texts were available in the columns of the *Critique Philosophique*. In 1903, a short collection of James's essays on emotion, including important later views, was published and translated by Georges Dumas, but they belonged to the series of papers on psychology. None of James's books (*The Principles of Psychology*, *Psychology Briefer*, *The Will to Believe* and the *Talks to Teachers*) was translated at that time.⁹ The first work to be translated was *The Varieties of Religious*

⁶ See, for an account, the report in *Revue de Métaphysique et de morale*, Paris, 1908, pp. 930 sq.

⁷ *Ivi.*, p. 930.

⁸ *Ivi.*, p. 950.

⁹ In most of the bibliographies, following a note by E. Leroux in the *Journal of Philosophy*, 1927, p. 202, references are made to a 1900 translation of the *Talks to teachers*. The present writer has never had such a volume in hand. The first references I have seen point to the 1907 translation by Pidoux (See: E. Reverdin, *La notion d'expérience d'après William James*, Georg, Geneva, 1913, p. 219; A. Ménard, *Analyse et critique des Principes de la psychologie de W. James*, Alcan, Paris, 1911, p. 2). Such a 1900 translation would severely conflict with items in James's correspondence. See James, William, Elizabeth M. Berkeley, and Ignas K. Skrupskelis, (Ed), *The Correspondence of William James*, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1994-2004, 12 Volumes [Hereafter CWJ], vol. 10, p. 242 (May

Experience, in 1906, by the Swiss philosopher Frank Abauzit. It was introduced by a preface by Boutroux, who, at that time, also devoted several studies to James's philosophy of religion. So, in 1905-1906, when pragmatism was in every column, readers had to gather what James's brand of pragmatism was all about from these two sources: the earliest papers of the *Will to Believe*, published in the *Critique Philosophique*, and the *Varieties*, translated in 1906. References to James's essays on radical empiricism, most of them published in English in 1905-1906, and to his more considered views, as developed in *Pragmatism*, were quite exceptional. Popular versions of James's philosophy became available, *Psychology briefer* as far as psychology is concerned (in 1909), *Pluralistic universe* as far as James's views on radical empiricism are concerned (in 1910), while the *Principles* and the *Essays* were — and is still, for the first — missing. Even these published materials were a poor starting-point for the reader: Abauzit, the translator for the *Varieties*, has edited, and sometimes rewritten, large portions of the work (Bergson declined to give a preface in reason of the poor opinion he had of that achievement). The French translation of *Pragmatism* is also notoriously unsatisfactory.¹⁰

We face thus a complex phenomenon and it should be treated piecemeal. As I have already shown elsewhere what happened to James's concept of experience when it fell into Boutroux's hands,¹¹ and, as some literature on Bergson's role is already extant,¹² I shall focus here on another important occasion: the prominent role Renouvier and his "lieutenants" took in the early reception of James's thought in France. As mentioned above, for a long time, the papers collected in the *Will to Believe*, translated by Renouvier as soon as they were published in English, in the 1880s, have been James's only texts available in French. As a result, the other features of James's work, his pragmatism, his radical empiricism, and in a lesser degree his psychology, have often been read *from this standpoint*, that is to say, as if they were further developments of what James had already said in the *Will to Believe*. From the perspective of the authors of the *Critique philosophique*,¹³ the "real" James was

1st, 1903), where James writes: "My *Talks* (nor any other of my works) ain't been translated into French". See also CWJ 10, p. 51, 1902.

¹⁰ A commentator wondered, in 1933, how a text, containing only four paragraphs ending with an exclamation mark, could turn, after translation, into one where they were one hundred and twenty two! (See E. Callot, *William James*, Jouve, Paris, 1933, p. 5, n. 2)

¹¹ See Mathias Girel, "Varieties of Experience in Boutroux and James," *Streams of William James*, 5, no. 2, 2003.

¹² Frédéric Worms, "Bergson et James: Lectures croisées," *Philosophie*, no. 4, 1999.

¹³ Pillon first edited *L'Année Philosophique* (*L'Année Philosophique*, Paris, 1868-1869 [Hereafter AP]), then it was replaced by the *Critique Philosophique* (Charles Renouvier

that of the early essays, with a clear emphasis on the moral postulates and the early theory of belief, and accordingly, these authors assessed James's later development against this standard. They repeatedly presented James as a "criticist", *i.e.* as a philosopher close in spirit from the Kantian type of moral philosophy they were advocating, and read what was not in line with this reading as slips or betrayals. Thus, I shall address the general question, the "distortion problem", through a close examination of what Renouvier and the renouvierans *made* of James's philosophy.

2. James's "Renouvierism"

At first sight, James's "Renouvierism" seems an obvious matter, not worthy of any serious dispute. Horace Kallen wrote, just after William James's death, reviewing a French book on him, that "it was from France that William James first received his philosophic inspiration, from France that he received his earliest recognition and his greatest honor."¹⁴ This was a clear reference to Renouvier's complex role in the diffusion of James's ideas, both as an inspirer and as a promoter, and any reader of James's early texts will certainly miss their point if she overlooks this reference.

Renouvier's long shadow can indeed be found both at the beginning and at the end of James's career. One quotes often the page of James's diary for April 30, 1870, where he records the impression made upon him by Renouvier's texts: "I finished the first part of Renouvier's second *Essais* and see no reason why his definition of free will — "the sustaining of a thought *because I choose to when I might have other thoughts*" — need be the definition of an illusion. At any rate, I will assume for the present — until next year—that it is no illusion. My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will."¹⁵ Nearly forty years later, James will record, in the draft of *Some Problems of Philosophy*, another aspect of this influence, but in a way that implies that it was at its strongest in

(Ed.), *La Critique Philosophique*, Paris, 1872-1889 [Hereafter CP], and afterwards by a new version of *L'Année Philosophique* (François Pillon (Ed.), *L'Année Philosophique*, Paris, 1891-1913). The main difference between these periodicals is the room devoted to the publications of the year (much more important in *L'Année Philosophique*).

¹⁴ H. M. Kallen, Review of Boutroux's *William James*, in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 8, 21, 1911, pp. 583-584.

¹⁵ As quoted in Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James. Briefer Version*, Cambridge, Harvard Univ Pr, 1948, p. 121. Hereafter we use the full version: *The Thought and Character of William James*, Little, Brown & C°, Boston, 1935, 2 vols. [Hereafter *Thought*]

his very early texts:

"[Charles Renouvier] was one of the greatest philosophic characters, and, but for the decisive impression made on me in the seventies by his masterly advocacy of pluralism, I might never have got free from the monistic superstition under which I had grown up. This is why, feeling endlessly thankful as I do, I dedicate this textbook to the great Renouvier's memory."¹⁶

This is an important acknowledgment indeed, and it turns into an overwhelming one when one opens the *Principles of Psychology*. They are dedicated to François Pillon, one of Renouvier's lieutenants, editor both for the *Critique Philosophique* and for the *Année Philosophique*, with a clear emphasis on the role this periodical played in the diffusion of James's ideas: "To my dear friend François Pillon, as a token of affection, and an acknowledgment of what I owe to the *Critique Philosophique*."¹⁷ What exactly is the extent of James's debt to Renouvier and in general to the *Critique Philosophique*?

The thesis of the present paper is that this debt, important as it may appear on a first reading, seems, on a second reading, to be confined within a limited number of issues; after the 1870s, important disagreements appear, which will grow more important after 1900 (and also after Renouvier's death in 1903), when James will defend his pragmatism.¹⁸ Again, my point is not the trivial claim that there are some differences between philosophers, but that the *Critique* dogmatically assessed James's views from the standpoint of Renouvier's philosophy, whose main tenets were not to be doubted or even qualified. This in turn contributed to complicate James's reception around 1900. The tone, mild enough concerning the *Varieties*, will clearly turn, from genial

¹⁶ W. James, *Some Problems of Philosophy*, Longmans, New York, 1912, pp. 164-165. [Hereafter SPP]

¹⁷ William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, New York, H. Holt, 1890 [Hereafter PP].

¹⁸ Phillippe Devaux, "A propos du 'Renouviérisme' de William James," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 32, 1978, pp. 385-406, argued that James's renouvierism had to be qualified. This paper should be used with caution (there is no reference to extant literature on that topic, including Perry 1935!). One important objection comes to mind when reading it: the author makes much of an alleged annotation on Renouvier's weakness as regards the "logic of relations" (*Op.cit.*, p. 399). Knowing that the book was lent to Peirce for some time in 1898 (See CWJ 8, p. 605), it would be important to know if the annotation were his or James's: there is no mention of that possibility in that paper. Perry, *Thought*, vol. 1, Ch. XXI-XXII, is, as always, very useful and still reliable, though quite short on the analysis of this relationship.

to plainly hostile: to the Renouvieran staff of the *Année Philosophique* James did not seem in line with his earlier papers anymore, and he was clearly held to be wrong for that. My purpose being to show how the staff of the *Critique*, while welcoming James's works, gradually refused some of their main tenets, I will try to show now that the main lines of disagreement appear in the 1880s, as witnessed by several kinds of documents: James's reviews of Renouvier's works; Renouvier's translations and remarks on James's works and letters in the *Critique Philosophique*; an important correspondence between the two thinkers, now available in the excellent edition of the *Correspondence of William James*, but already published by R.B. Perry in a famous historical edition;¹⁹ further remarks and interactions with Pillon and Dauriac, two "renouvierites". Even though the whole correspondence ranges from 1872 to 1896, its richest period is between 1878 and 1884. Several threads cover the whole period, but three distinct stages nevertheless clearly stand out. At first, James is a Renouvier reader, and sometimes reviewer; then, in 1877-78, James becomes a contributor of the *Critique*; finally clear lines of divergence appear after 1884.

3. Readings and Reviews of Renouvier

The James-Renouvier correspondence starts in 1872, when James writes to Renouvier to ask him a copy of Lequier's *Recherche d'une première vérité*,²⁰ and confesses that he found for the first time in Renouvier's *Essais de critique générale* "an intelligible and reasonable conception of freedom": "I accept it almost entirely. On other points of your philosophy, I am beginning to experience a rebirth of moral life; and I assure you, Monsieur, that it is not a small thing."²¹ Much has been written on James's crisis in 1870 and on the influence of Renouvier's philosophy of freedom on James, and no further repetition is needed here of a topic that is nicely and widely displayed in the available literature.

James, however, was not satisfied with merely reading Renouvier, and he

¹⁹ Ralph Barton Perry (Ed.), "Correspondance de Charles Renouvier et de William James," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, no. 1, 1929, pp. 1-35; pp. 193-222, and Ralph Barton Perry (Ed.), "Un Échange de lettres entre Renouvier et William James," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 1935, pp. 303-318. [Hereafter RMM].

²⁰ See Donald Wayne Viney, "William James on Free Will: The French Connection," *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 14, 1, 1997, pp. 29-52.

²¹ RMM, 1929, p. 3; Nov 2, 1872.

also devoted considerable energy to make this philosopher popular to American readers. Thanking James for his reviews (in 1873, and again in 1876), Renouvier praised their accurateness, in particular as to his assessment of the differences and common tenets between his own philosophy and the British empiricist, associationist and determinist doctrines;²² indeed a decisive acknowledgment for the young William James.²³ Renouvier's views seem to refuse any absolutist approach—he is a phenomenist—but his system sounded as an alternative to the determinist views of most of the empiricist writers James was reading at that time. It is however striking that, while Renouvier thanks James for having correctly described the “new criticism”²⁴—that is to say the revised form of *Kantism* Renouvier was advocating—James sees in Renouvier the classic representative of the “tendency launched by Hume”.²⁵ The whole ambiguity turns on Renouvier's phenomenism, which can be read from either standpoint. Actually, Renouvier was critical both of the Kantian and of the Humian tradition, as appears in the concise account François Pillon gave for Renouvier's obituary in 1903, an account we shall take here as correct, although insufficient:

“The essentials principles by which the reformed criticism or neo-criticism [Renouvier's philosophy] contrasts with Kant's criticism consist in the triple negation of noumena, of the infinite of quantity, and of the universal determinism of phenomena. On the other hand, due to the room he makes for—and the importance he gives to—the categories and laws of reason, it contrasts with David Hume's empirical phenomenism. It is accurately characterized by the terms *rational phenomenism*, *finitism* and *libertarism*.”²⁶

Thus, from the young James's standpoint, several aspects of Renouvier's work sound appealing. First, we should not overlook his craving for alternative “champions”. Renouvier's conceptions are a convincing alternative to the extent he appears, in James's eyes, as no minor philosopher at all. He is, for James, *the French Philosopher*, quite a controversial statement for American readers of his time, and his *Essais de Critique Générale* are deemed “the ablest philosophical speculation to which France has given birth during this century”,²⁷ which was a confirmation of his very first opinion of the

²² RMM, 1929, p. 6.

²³ As it would be still later on, see CWJ 5, p. 56 (1879).

²⁴ RMM, 1929, p. 6, Jul 17, 1876.

²⁵ RMM, 1929, p. 7, Jul 29, 1876.

²⁶ AP, 1903, p. 310.

²⁷ James, *Essays Comments, Reviews*, Harvard, 1988, p. 266 [Hereafter ECR]. See a later description at CWJ 5, p. 503: “A philosopher armed from head to foot with all the implements of his profession”.

philosopher:

“A review of the state of philosophy in France for some years back is by one Charles Renouvier of whom I never heard before”[but who is] “so different from the namby pamby diffusiveness of most Frenchmen [*sic*].”²⁸

Then, besides this acknowledgment, there are two other evident lines of attraction for William James, which appear in his first review²⁹ in 1873: Renouvier's *phenomenism*, and his refusal of the doctrine of necessity, the two aspects being tightly connected. Renouvier is not a basic phenomenist, since “possibility” is for him an ultimate factor of the universe, what clearly separate him from the British brand of phenomenism:

“The knowable universe is for him, as for the school of Mill and Bain, a system of phenomena, and metaphysic is an analysis or inventory of their elements. But among these elements he finds the *possibility*, which British empiricism denies, of absolute beginnings, or, in other words, of free will.”³⁰

Real possibilities, real beginnings and endings are thus not a matter of mere ontological concern: they are crucial for a philosophy where free acts can initiate new beginnings, where novelty is not only an appearance but an indefeasible dimension of action. Interestingly enough, the building of a philosophy itself—a peculiar kind of act—was seen by Renouvier as a major manifestation of freedom. As James well remarks, the first act of free will is thus its own self-affirmation “so that we have an *act* enthroned in the heart of philosophical thought.”³¹

These points are further developed a few years later. James's 1876 review³² deals with both Bain and Renouvier, but the latter is given the prominent part of the review. Two points stand out, with James's later development in mind. First, we find again what James took as Renouvier's main insight—and what

²⁸ WJ to Henry James Sr, CWJ 4, Oct 5, p. 342. Renouvier had indeed made a survey of French philosophy in the first issue of *l'Année Philosophique*, stressing the sundry advantages of the “philosophie critique”. *De la Philosophie du XIXe Siècle*, par Ch. Renouvier, AP, 1868, pp. 1-108.

²⁹ “Renouvier's Contribution to *La Critique Philosophique*” (1873), ECR, pp. 265-67.

³⁰ ECR, p. 266.

³¹ *Ivi*.

³² “*The Emotions and the Will*, by Alexander Bain and *Essais de Critique générale*, by Charles Renouvier” (1876), ECR, pp. 321-327.

was to become the basic thrust of his own *Will to Believe*—, namely, the idea that philosophical systems are not only theoretical constructions, but also involve the entire human nature: “the entire nature of man, intellectual, affective, and volitional is (whether avowedly or not) exhibited in the theoretical attitude he takes in such a question as [determinism vs. indeterminism].”³³ Secondly, such a philosophy involves an account of belief that James would develop for the next twenty years: in Renouvier “the act of belief and the object of belief coalesce, and the very essential logic of the situation demands that we wait not for any outward sign, but, with the possibility of doubting open to us, voluntarily take the alternative of faith.”³⁴ Many Renouvieran arguments could be detected in the detail of the first essays of the *Will to Believe*, and it is noteworthy that James had made extensive use of most of them before 1880, even if he did not accept all of them.³⁵

4. James as a Contributor

James soon becomes a contributor of the *Critique Philosophique*. The end of 1877 is a turning point in James’s development: his first piece, “Quelques considérations sur la méthode subjective”,³⁶ written directly in French, a defence of indeterminism in favor of the efficacy of free will, is published and introduced by Renouvier. The gist of this paper, in complete agreement with “the principles of philosophy to which [Renouvier’s] review is dedicated”,³⁷ was the question whether “one (can) be justified in rejecting a theory which many objective facts apparently confirm, solely because it does not in any way respond to our inward preferences.”³⁸ James’s answer, relying on the “subjective” method, and on the upshot of the subject’s efforts, was affirmative and laid a clear emphasis on two essential faculties, that of “setting ourselves a task in virtue of an act of faith which can be accomplished only by our own effort; and that of entering boldly into action in circumstances when success

³³ *Ivi.*, p. 325.

³⁴ *Ivi.*, p. 326.

³⁵ *WJ to Renouvier*, Jul 29, 1876: “As I stand today, unable wholly to commit myself to your position, to burn my ships behind me, and proclaim the belief in the One and the Many to be the Original Sin of Mind”, *COWJ* 4, p. 541.

³⁶ *CP*, 1877, n°2, pp. 407-413; See the remarks by Renouvier, *CP*, 1878, n°2, pp. 97-106

³⁷ James, *Eph*, p. 331.

³⁸ *Ivi.*

can not be assured in advance.”³⁹ James presented his claim as consistent with Renouvier’s views,⁴⁰ a diagnosis shared by Renouvier himself.⁴¹ A line of thinking, prominent in Chapters from 2 to 5 of the *Will to Believe*, appears thus for the first time in the late 1870’s, in Renouvier’s *Critique*. These papers often pay due compliments to Renouvier,⁴² and develop the insights we have discerned in the two reviews.

Still, this first paper in French will be the only contribution written solely for the *Critique*, since the next ones will usually be published in the US or in *Mind* first, and then translated or summarized.⁴³ Typically, Renouvier would ask the consent to translate a paper James had sent him. Then James would accept and warn Renouvier that his time would be better spent developing his own philosophy. Several installments would soon follow, which, in retrospective, may be classed in two groups: some will belong to the *Principles*; but most of them will be included or used in *The Will to Believe*. James, then, is by no means a minor contributor of the *Critique*: his contributions are frequent between 1878 and 1884, and he is the only non-French regular author for this journal. In addition to Renouvier’s short introductions to his own translations,⁴⁴

³⁹ *Ivi.*, p. 338.

⁴⁰ “To talk of freedom in the *Critique Philosophique* is to carry gold to California”, *Eph*, p. 338 (=CP, 1877, n°2, p. 412).

⁴¹ James’s thoughts are deemed “conform to the criticist method and we would be glad to sign them (*nous nous estimerions heureux de pouvoir les signer*)”, quoted in *Eph*, p. 31 (=CP, 1877, n°2, p. 413).

⁴² For example, the *Dilemma of Determinism*: “It is my duty to say that my reasonings are almost entirely that of Renouvier; they can be found in the *Psychologie rationnelle*, and in the periodical *La Critique Philosophique* as well”, *Le dilemme du déterminisme*, *CP*, n°2, 1884, pp. 273-280, 305-312, 353-362; the quote is p. 273.

⁴³ *De la caractéristique intellectuelle de l’homme, d’après William James* (partial translation and commentary upon *Brute and Human Intellect*; *CP*, 1879, n°1, pp. 369-376, 394-397; n°2, pp. 17-26, 41-48); *Le Sentiment de la rationalité* (tr. of *The Sentiment of Rationality*), *CP*, 1879, 8, 2, pp. 72-80, 81-89, 113-118, 129-136 (See the note p. 136 where Renouvier reports that James is lecturing on his *Essais* at Harvard); *Le Sentiment de l’effort* (tr. of “The Feeling of Effort”), *CP*, 1880, 2, pp. 123-128, 129-135, 145-148, 200-208, 220-224, 225-231, 289-291.; *Les Grands Hommes, les grandes pensées, et le milieu* (tr. of *Great Men, Great Thoughts, and their Environment*), *CP*, 1880, n°2, 396-400, 407-415, *CP*, 1881, n°1, pp. 1-14; *Action réflexe et théisme* (tr. of *Reflex Action and Theism*), *CP*, 1881, 2, pp., 385-391, 401-410; *CP* 1882, 1, p. 5-13. *Rationalité, activité, foi* (tr. of *Rationality, Activity and faith*), *CP* 1882, n°2, pp. 129-140, 145-154, 161-166; *Le Dilemme du déterminisme* (tr. of *The Dilemma of Determinism*), *CP* 1884, n°2, pp. 273-80, 305-316, 353-362; *Ce que fait la volonté* (What the will effects), 1888, n°1, p. 401.

⁴⁴ Charles Renouvier: “La question de la certitude. IX. Le pari de Pascal et le pari de M. W. James”, *CP*, 1878, n°2, pp. 97-106. “De la caractéristique intellectuelle de l’homme d’après

some of his views are discussed in detail in Renouvier's books. For example, Renouvier gave in his *Esquisse d'une Classification*⁴⁵ a lengthy account of the way James understood the triadic nature of action, the teleological nature of mind, and faith;⁴⁶ James is also mentioned in the late *Nouvelle Monadologie* (1899),⁴⁷ but the most obvious mark of consideration given by Renouvier is certainly the time he spent translating James, and introducing him to the French audience.⁴⁸

My first claim was that these publications gave James's philosophy a definite shape to French readers, and one should not overlook the influence of these translations. To take just one instance, Joseph Delboeuf devoted some fifteen pages in the widely read *Revue Philosophique*⁴⁹ to James's paper on "the Feeling of Effort", just published in the *Critique*. As early as 1882, in a book on "Human personality", James is referred to as a "noted" writer, and his account of effort offered as one of the "most interesting" views extant.⁵⁰

M. W. James", CP, 1879, n°1, pp. 369-376, 394-97; n°2, 1879, pp. 17-26, 41-48; "Quelques remarques sur la théorie de la volonté de M. W. James", CP, 1888, n°2, pp. 117-126, reply by WJ, *Ivi.*, p. 401-404, "Quelques mots sur la lettre qui précède", pp. 404-406.

⁴⁵ In Charles Renouvier, *Esquisse d'une classification systématique des doctrines philosophiques*, Bureau de la critique philosophique, Paris, 1885-1886, vol. 2, pp. 176 sq.

⁴⁶ See in particular Renouvier, *Esquisse*, pp. 176-185; pp. 280-283; pp. 320-324. For an excellent introduction to Renouvier, see Laurent Fedi, *Le Problème de la connaissance dans la philosophie de Charles Renouvier*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1998.

⁴⁷ Charles Renouvier, *La Nouvelle Monadologie*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1899, p. 164, p. 213.

⁴⁸ Renouvier's attempts are not the only ones. One should not overlook the numerous reviews of WJ's papers in the *Revue Philosophique*. In particular, as regards the early papers: "Définition de l'esprit par Spenser", vol. VI, p.433; "La fonction de la connaissance", XIX, p. 348; "La Perception de l'espace" XXIV, p. 207, p. 670; "La Qualité propre de l'espace", VII, p. 590; "La perception du temps", XXIV, p. 670; "L'Association des idées", X, p. 229; "Le Sentiment du rationnel", VIII, p. 442; "L'Intelligence chez la brute et chez l'homme", VII, p.102; "Quelques omissions dans la psychologie d'observation intérieure", XVII, p. 235; "Qu'est-ce qu'une émotion?" XVIII, p. 482; "Sommes-nous des automates?", VII, p. 585; "Sur quelques maximes hégéliennes", XIV, p. 458; "Psychologie de la croyance", 1889, II, p. 447; "La psychologie comme science naturelle", 1892, II, 108. "L'immortalité de l'homme", 1899, I, p. 198; "La volonté de croire", 1899, I, p. 223; "Humanisme et vérité", 1904, II, p. 667; "La conscience existe-t-elle?" 1905, II, p. 224; "Un monde d'expérience pure", 1905, II, p. 224.

⁴⁹ J. Delboeuf, "Le sentiment de l'effort", *Revue Philosophique*, 1881, pp. 513-527.

⁵⁰ See Charles Jeanmaire, *L'idée de la personnalité humaine dans la psychologie moderne*, Douladoure-Privat, Toulouse, 1882. WJ had browsed that volume at Pilon's (CWJ 5, p. 427). Jeanmaire, in the few pages he devoted to James, had seen – a point still overlooked by the majority of James's commentators – that it was not relevant to make a crude distinction between will and belief in James's texts: "si la volition, considérée en elle-

Moreover, Bergson, in his *Essais sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (Paris, Alcan, 1889), quotes the same paper on effort in the opening pages of the book.⁵¹ It is no accident if James's papers in the *Critique* have given his philosophy a particular shape in France: when the debate over pragmatism started, French readers were already acquainted with James's early ideas since twenty years. Not only had they been available, but they had also been discussed with a thoughtfulness and a patience, that the later papers on pragmatism and radical empiricism will not receive.

At this time, Renouvier still reads James as an ally,⁵² and praises him for his resistance to Hegelianism at Harvard. James had expressed his struggle in vivid terms: "It is a strange thing, this resurrection of Hegel in England and here, after his burial in Germany. I think his philosophy will probably have an important influence on the development of our liberal form of Christianity. It gives a quasi-metaphysical backbone, which this theology has always been in need of, but it is too fundamentally rotten and charlatanish to last long. As a reaction against materialistic evolutionism it has its use, only this evolutionism is fertile, while Hegelianism is absolutely sterile."⁵³ James made no secret that in this "war" his best weapons were Renouvier's "pluralism and empiricism".⁵⁴ Renouvier's encouragements are thus no wonder, but they contain the first acknowledgment we know of James as the possible "founder" of an "American philosophy": "Your originality, your direct view of that which is really *to be seen*, will lose rather than gain by much reading, and especially by the reading of German philosophical books. It seems to me when I read you that you are called to found an *American philosophy*. So it would not do for you to make sacrifices to alien gods (*dieux étrangers*)."⁵⁵

même, ne consiste qu'à agir sur les idées, pour les maintenir, les suspendre, les écarter, en quoi diffère-t-elle de la croyance, qui est aussi un acte par lequel nous acceptons ou repoussons les idées? M. James, à l'exemple encore de M. Renouvier, pense que la différence n'est pas grande."(*cit.*, 315) Jeanmaire quotes Renouvier and James's account nearly in the same breath. WJ, reading the book, remarks that "such glory and fame come from Renouvier's translating my feeling of effort" (CWJ 5, p. 427, to AHGJ).

⁵¹ H. Bergson, *Essais sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, Alcan, Paris, 1889; reprint P.U.F., Paris, 1993, pp. 16-17

⁵² CR to WJ, Aug 21, 1879: "your version of *criticisme* is presented with a startling originality, or happiness of expression, with an accent of your own", RMM, 1929, p. 12. Translation in Perry, *Thought*, 1935, vol. 1, p. 669.

⁵³ Dec 27, 1880, RMM, 1929, p. 17, Perry, *Thought*, 1935, vol. 1, p. 675.

⁵⁴ May 8, 1882, RMM, 1929, p. 21.

⁵⁵ CR to WJ, Sept 5, 1882, RMM, 1929, p. 24; tr. Perry, *Thought*, vol. 1, p. 679, slightly edited. Italics are Renouvier's.

Still, when James and Renouvier met in August 1880,⁵⁶ one might wonder whether James's admiration had not already tarnished, at least in part. Three points should be considered.

(1) The year before they met, James had lectured on Renouvier at Harvard (1879-1880), and this experience is likely to have led him to reassess their relationship. In that occasion he realized that Renouvier's "exposition offer(ed) too many difficulties",⁵⁷ as he phrases it to Royce, a diagnosis confirmed by a letter to Renouvier where James confesses that this course had left him "more unsettled that (he had been) for years".⁵⁸ One of the main reasons for this statement was his difficulty to explain his students Renouvier's denial of the infinite, as is witnessed by an eighteen points letter to Renouvier on that topic.⁵⁹ James did not object directly to Renouvier's "principle of number" (*le principe du nombre*), that is, to the assumption that an infinite number is self-contradictory—that would have been Peirce's way to approach the question. He instead questioned Renouvier's way of constructing a dilemma between the finiteness or the infinity of Space. He already suspected that to hold space (and time) as "either finite, or infinite" was not relevant at all and pointed then to the "boundlessness" and "continuity"⁶⁰ of these forms, as eluding Renouvier's dilemma. The questions were soon followed by a lengthy answer,⁶¹ which, according to James's confession, "fail(ed) to awaken conviction".⁶² The broader question, whether the "*principe du nombre*" was sound at all, remained an interrogation mark, in James's thought, and for a long time indeed. Later on, James will seem to entertain serious doubts over Renouvier's account of the infinite, especially after he had become aware of the new mathematical theories on that topic.⁶³

(2) Despite James's later efforts to point up the parts of Renouvier's system

⁵⁶ CWJ 5, p. 135.

⁵⁷ *Ivi.*, p. 84.

⁵⁸ *Ivi.*, p. 98.

⁵⁹ *Ivi.*, pp. 75-79.

⁶⁰ *Ivi.*, p. 76.

⁶¹ RMM, 1935, pp. 310-318.

⁶² CWJ 5, p. 98.

⁶³ "The new infinitists have disproved the contention of Renouvier *et al.* that the realization of a cardinal infinite is impossible. They may have proved it possible. They haven't yet proved it actual" ("Fragment on the Infinite", 1902-1910), James, *Manuscript Essays and Notes*. Works. Harvard, H.U.P., p. 217. [Hereafter MEN]

which would agree with Darwin's ideas about evolution,⁶⁴ Renouvier was extremely dubious, to say the least, about the very idea of evolution. Also this could be the source of later disagreements, since, in 1878, while James was trying to find the real Darwinian insights behind Spencer's oversimplifications of them, Renouvier wrote to him:

"Evolution is a craze (*une toquade*). It will last fifteen or twenty years, and then we shall again speak of it as one spoke of the system of Lamarck at the time of Cuvier. So the world goes. It will be found strange to have, on behalf of gratuitous inductions and in the name of experimental method, denied such a fact as the existence of species, which *crève les yeux* (stares you in the face), as we say in French."⁶⁵

(3) Another important dissent involved the importance of *conceptual categories*. In my view, but I can just broach it here, much light will be cast on the development of James's thought through a careful reading of his assessments of Renouvier and Hodgson around 1880. An important episode during this period is the debate between Hodgson and Renouvier. In 1881, Hodgson submitted Renouvier's *Essais de critique générale* to close-reading in the pages of *Mind*,⁶⁶ the result of which is quite an interesting document, since the two men were both phenomenists, with strong commitments in the field of practical philosophy,⁶⁷ but they were at odds on some issues: on free will, on the role of conceptual categories, defended by Renouvier against Hodgson, on universal determinism and the Infinite, defended by Hodgson against Renouvier. Hodgson's reading was translated in the *Critique* and commented at length,⁶⁸ soon followed by Renouvier's analysis of Hodgson's *Philosophy of Reflection*,⁶⁹ followed in turn by a long reply by Hodgson.⁷⁰ Having in mind James's enthusiasm with Renouvier, and knowing the consideration he also paid to Hodgson, it is interesting to see what remained unshaken by Hodgson's

⁶⁴ James, ECR, p. 444.

⁶⁵ CR to WJ, May 14, 1878. RMM, 1929, p. 10. Perry gives only part of the letter in *Thought*, vol. 1, p. 667.

⁶⁶ S. Hodgson, "Mr Renouvier's Philosophy," *Mind*, 1881, pp. 31-61, pp. 173-211.

⁶⁷ See CWJ 5, pp. 43-44. Hodgson, contrariwise to Renouvier, did not admit that the denial of free-will involved the denial of moral distinctions between right or wrong.

⁶⁸ CP, 1881, n°2, pp. 188-192, 209-216 (reply by CR, 216-221), 225-234, 305-312, 342-351, 353-364, 369-374.

⁶⁹ CP, 1882, n°1, pp. 17-27, 55-63, 170-176; CP, 1882, n°2, 209-219, 241-246; CP, 1883, n°1, 36-48, 65-75, 97-104, 113-123, 134-143.

⁷⁰ *Ivi.*, pp. 241-253, 373-379, 391-400.

attacks. In several letters, James is very clear that Hodgson's criticisms of Renouvier did not seriously diminish his confidence in this latter's philosophy, and even confirmed the hopes he had put in him, since only an important philosopher could deserve such a careful, although critical, reading, as the following letter to makes plain: "Despite the fact that he rejects Renouvier's two most important tenets, the finiteness of the world, and free will, he says enough to make Renouvier the most important philosopher of our time—You can think how it pleased me to have this evidence that I have not been a fool in sticking so to Renouvier."⁷¹ He further seemed to side with Renouvier against Hodgson on free-will.⁷² Still, Renouvier's Kantism as regards categories, the focus of many attacks by Hodgson, in *Mind* as well as in his "Replies" in the *Critique*, was something that James could not miss, and it is tempting to think that Hodgson's criticisms—on that very point—found their way into James's thought. Granted what he was undertaking against Kantian approaches to perception,⁷³ from the "Spatial Quale" on, James could not but agree with Hodgson on that matter. Interestingly, Hodgson assumed that Renouvier had retained the worst part of Kant's philosophy:

"He makes just the same mistake that Kant made, namely, to assume a spiritual agent working in certain indispensable forms of thought ... I class him with the German Cognition-theorists."⁷⁴

This was precisely the position James was trying to undermine in the field of psychology. Assuming as he did that there was no need of any "Kantian machine-shop" in order to explain the articulation of experience, Hodgson's remarks about Renouvier "who starts with a list of conceptual categories as his ultimates and basis of experience"⁷⁵ certainly did not meet much dissent.

It is thus tempting to claim that, around 1880, James had taken all he needed from Renouvier: the core of the *Will to Believe*. If James—although lesser and lesser—still read Renouvier's works, most of what he could use of Renouvier's insights had already been taken. It is no accident if, mentioning a possible stay with Renouvier and the Pillons, as early as 1883, he was ready to affirm his

⁷¹ CWJ 5, p. 109, to AHGJ.

⁷² *Ivi.*, p. 396. See an interesting letter by Hodgson, *Ibid.*, p. 200.

⁷³ See Mathias Girel, "The Metaphysics and Logic of Psychology: Peiree's Reading of James's Principles," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 34, no. 2, 2003, pp. 163-203; esp. §1.

⁷⁴ Shadworth Hodgson to WJ, Oct 17, 1882, CWJ 5, p. 276.

⁷⁵ SH to WJ, March 6, 1886, CWJ 6, p. 120.

own philosophical independence:

"Philosophers must part, as soon as they have extracted each other's juice; that is, if they are each working on his own line there inevitably comes a day when they have gone as far together as they can ever go, & after that it is nothing but the accentuation & rubbing in differences, without change."⁷⁶

On the other hand, the *Critique* had been a platform for James's early texts, and gave the keynote of James's reception for a long time, even when the development of his thought led him in a different direction.

5. Dissents

Not every paper from James, however, did raise the same enthusiasm in Renouvier. After the reception of "What is an emotion" and of "Some omissions of introspective psychology", as new trends emerged in James's psychology, the tone of their correspondence will never be the same again, although in his very last letter to Renouvier, James still insisted that he was one of his disciples.⁷⁷ Renouvier objected to several major tenets of James's psychology, and this sentence about James's papers on space, in a letter of 1887, possibly summarizes accurately his general attitude during the last years of their correspondence: "My Kantian habits of mind make this reading and the understanding of your processes of thought and your language more difficult than I should like."⁷⁸ Renouvier also frowned at James's interest in the new "psychic research".⁷⁹ Explicit dissents started to develop. Actually, it might be argued that two asymmetric processes started: in James's eyes, the differences between Renouvier and the narrow rationalism he was allegedly fighting were becoming less and less evident; as for Renouvier (and his staff), James seemed to reach conclusions which were in tension with his earlier commitments.

⁷⁶ WJ to AHG James, Jan 29, 1883, CWJ 5, p. 410.

⁷⁷ WJ to Renouvier, Aug 4, 1896: "... an article [...] called "the Will to Believe" in which (if you took the trouble to look at it) you probably recognized how completely I am still your disciple. In this point more than any other; and this point is central." (CWJ 8, p. 179) See also James's attempts, in 1900, to have Renouvier elected as a foreign correspondent for the Berlin Academy of Science, CWJ 9, p. 224.

⁷⁸ CR to WJ, March 27, 1887, RMM, 1929, pp. 211-212; tr. Perry, *Thought*, 1935, vol. 1, p. 701.

⁷⁹ CR to WJ, Feb 5, 1886, RMM, 1929, p. 208.

As my point, here, is to focus on Renouvier's dissents from James, rather than the other way round, I shall consider briefly James's reactions. James's late review of Renouvier's *Principes de la nature*,⁸⁰ certainly did not add much to his early insights. All the salient aspects of the doctrine are those which had attracted his interest in the 1870s—the points specifically developed in the *Principles of nature* are just browsed, and James can complain this time about the “strenuous abstractness of Renouvier's terms”.⁸¹ Of course, signs of consideration, and some dramatization, are still present. Renouvier is now put forth as the major opponent to the “through and through” vision of the universe advocated by the different brands of Hegelianism, but as we saw, this was no news to James.⁸² The terms, however, are more striking: “As Bonaparte said that the Europe of the future would have to be either Republican or Cossack, so, to put the matter ultra-simply, the present reviewer feels like saying that the philosophy of the future will have to be that either of Renouvier or of Hegel.”⁸³ In the same way, his formulation of Renouvier's main insights is perhaps a little closer of his ideas about belief and doubt: “For philosophies are acts. Whether men admit or deny the fact, passion always plays some part in making them reject or hold to systems, and volition, whether predestinate or unpredestinate, always will play a part in deciding when to encourage and when to suppress one's doubts.”⁸⁴ But a new element appeared more clearly, which is not consonant with James's ideas at that time. Renouvier's finitist *monadology*. This involved a tychist and pluralist worldview, which is certainly the distinctive mark of Renouvier's late philosophy: “the world, so far as real, is like an immense pulsation composed of a number (unassignable though at all times determinate) of concerted elementary pulsations of different grades.”⁸⁵

Interesting as this worldview may seem, there is no doubt about James's view of it: “Renouvier cannot be true – his world is so much dust.”⁸⁶ Several matters were at stake: the relevance of *monadology* in general, which seems at

⁸⁰ “*Les Principes de la nature*, 2nd ed., by Charles Renouvier” (1893). *Essays, Comments and Reviews*. H.U.P., Harvard, 1987 [Hereafter ECR], pp. 440-446. See also “*L'Année Philosophique*, 2e année, ed. by François Pillon” (1892), in James, ECR, pp. 426-432.

⁸¹ James, ECR, p. 440.

⁸² See CWJ 5, p. 48, 1879: “The (Hegelian) school and that of Renouvier are the only serious alternatives today.”

⁸³ James, ECR, p. 441.

⁸⁴ *Ivi.*, p. 442.

⁸⁵ *Ivi.*, p. 443.

⁸⁶ WJ to J. Royce, Dec 18, 1892, CWJ 7, p. 351.

odds with James's own brand of *pluralism*, the discontinuity in Renouvier's worldview as opposed to the continuous connections of experience,⁸⁷ and finally, the form in which Renouvier's arguments were clad. Slowly, Renouvier entered the list of philosophers whose insights are important, but whose “form” is defective: “[Renouvier's] form is atrocious, but I am thankful to him for a number of points of view rather vital to me. The whole of my essay “The Will to Believe” is cribbed from him.”⁸⁸ In a letter to Flournoy, James depicted Renouvier as a “classical” philosopher: “I entirely agree that Renouvier's system fails to satisfy, but it seems to me the classical and consistent expression of *one* of the great attitudes, that of insisting on logically intelligible formulas. If one goes beyond, one must abandon the hope of formulas altogether.”⁸⁹ The whole question revolved on the necessity of going “beyond” Renouvier.

More important for our purpose is a short survey of the three topics on which Renouvier started raising explicit objections, further re-activated by his “lieutenants” Dauriac and Pillon: Emotions, Will, and Stream of thought.

– *Emotion*. Renouvier – and we shall see that the same argument holds for Pillon and Dauriac – did not accept James's theory of emotion. The physiological strain adopted in that field became thus the first important bone to pick with James. Renouvier, starting in 1884 with “What is emotion?”, repeatedly read these texts as attempts to *reduce* consciousness and to give too much credit to reflex action. He first objected to James's theory in the correspondence,⁹⁰ and expressed further doubts in his *Nouvelle Monadologie*.⁹¹ According to Renouvier, (1) either James said something that sounded quite Cartesian in its spirit, namely, that all our emotions are caused or *accompanied* by bodily motions (what left open the question of specific cerebral emotions); (2) or he held a more radical thesis, that is, our emotions are the perception of bodily movements, what sounds uncanny: “When I try to grasp what this means I am forced back to the principle of former theories such as Cartesian occasionalism, for I cannot rationally think that *fear*, for example, *is* the perception of a certain molecular vibration.”⁹² This will become more obvious when we pay attention to the reactions of Pillon and Dauriac; Renouvier

⁸⁷ For these two first points, see Perry, *Thought*, vol. 1, pp. 660-661.

⁸⁸ WJ to C.S. Peirce, 1897, CWJ 8, p. 324.

⁸⁹ CWJ 7, pp. 317-318, 1892.

⁹⁰ See CR to WJ, Sept 11, 1884, RMM, 1929, p. 204; Perry, *Thought*, 1935, vol. 1, p. 696.

⁹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 213.

⁹² Perry, *Thought*, 1935, vol. 1, p. 697.

himself, however, did not welcome that part of James's thinking. It is noteworthy that in response to Renouvier James reformulated his account in a shape much more open to Renouvier's criticism: "I don't mean that the emotion is the *perception* of bodily changes *as such*, but only that the bodily changes give us a feeling, which is the emotion (...). Now all I say is that the nerve process is the incoming currents, produced by reflex movements which the perception of the exciting cause engenders".⁹³ Even though there are elements in James's works to make sense of this concession, in Renouvier's eyes, it meant a choice in favor of the "Cartesian" reading of the theory. Finally, despite this concession, Renouvier never could subscribe to James's views on this point.

- *The Will*. The most interesting documents are provided by the papers on the Will. In 1888, Renouvier translated James's paper on "What the Will Effects",⁹⁴ and added some remarks, which were soon followed by a reply from James.⁹⁵ These remarks expressed both admiration for James – insofar as his views converge with Renouvier's own utterances, thirty years before, in the Second Essay of the *Critique générale* (1859)⁹⁶ – and criticisms. Renouvier, as James after him, started with the observation of involuntary movements and concluded that, since the Will was separable from (was not responsible for) them and that nearly all animal movements could be explained with them, the Will could not be necessary to account for them: ideas or sensations were enough for that. The Will is not, in Renouvier, a mysterious and "mythological" entity, but the *power to sustain an idea*, the idea itself giving

⁹³ James, *Eps.*, pp. 362-63.

⁹⁴ *Ivi.*, pp. 216-234.

⁹⁵ "Quelques remarques sur le théorie de la volonté de M. W. James", CP, 1888, n°2, p. 117.

⁹⁶ As early as "The feeling of Effort" (1880), translated in the *Critique Philosophique* the same year "Le Sentiment de l'effort." (See full references above). James claimed that Renouvier's "account of the psychology of volition was the firmest, and in (his) opinion, the truest connected treatment yet given to the subject" (*Eps.*, p. 109). James argued in this paper against traditional conceptions of volition, i.e. against the assumption that any act of the will had to be preceded by a decision. The will was only another name for the domination of an idea on others: "Attention, belief, affirmation and motor volition are thus four names for an identical process, incidental to the conflict of ideas alone, the survival of one in spite of the opposition of others" (*Feeling of Effort*, *Eps.*, p. 124). This was the basic thrust of Renouvier's texts on that subject and James did not claim any originality on that issue, no more than he did in 1888 in "What the Will Effects", translated the same year in the *Critique*, and described by WJ as "little more than what you said long ago in your *Psychologie Rationnelle*" (*Eps.*, p. 407, WJ to CR, March 12, 1888).

rise to movements and actions. There is no need of an intermediary act between the representation and the movement, as the classical account of the will would have it: Representations themselves are followed by movements, whether voluntary or not. For Renouvier, this helps to explain that the action of the will is psychical through and through: it is only a name for a certain relationship our attention has with a representation. James illustrated his theory with the example of the person in his bed, thinking of waking up, and then waking up, without any intermediary representation or act,⁹⁷ this, however, was merely an echo of Renouvier.⁹⁸ If the two men agreed on mythological nature of most representations of the Will, what Renouvier could then object to James? His fault, in Renouvier's eyes, was to give too much credit to the "new psychology" and to the psycho-physiological scheme, blurring the distinction between mere reactive movements and "acts" of consciousness. He suspected that, once the reflex act scheme is applied to all acts, whether they are psychical or not, James could be read as denying consciousness a real power of initiative. The second important dissent, here, involved concerns on the nature of the ideas reinforced by the attention: for Renouvier, they are the perception of *changes in the environment*; whereas in his reading, James would only be considering the *sensations* we are to expect if we undertake such and such a move. Yet, in most cases, we don't know exactly what sensations we are to expect. In his interesting reply,⁹⁹ James made a concession on this second point, but resisted on the first: the Will is only regulative of actual nervous tracts, equipossible and leading to different results. This called for a new account of consciousness, still less likely to be shared by Renouvier:

"We only have to admit that the consciousness which accompanies material processes can react in such a way that it adds at leisure to the intensity or the duration of some particular processes; a field of *selection* opens at once, which leads us far away from mere mechanical determination."¹⁰⁰

James will maintain such a reading in later texts on radical empiricism, in

⁹⁷ PP, vol. 2, p. 524.

⁹⁸ Renouvier's *Psychologie Rationnelle*, 1859, quoted by himself, in CP, 1888, n°2, p. 121: "Au moment, par exemple, où je me demande si je lèverai le doigt, ou si je ne le lèverai pas, que puis-je saisir dans ma conscience? Ou ceci: le doigt représenté comme levé, sans opposition de fin contraire, ni intervention d'aucune autre idée; et alors le doigt se lève, comme dans le phénomène du vertige, dont j'ai rendu compte; ou cela, la représentation du même acte comme suspendu, et alors le doigt ne se lève pas."

⁹⁹ James, *Essays in Psychology*, Harvard Univ. Pr., Cambridge (Mass), 1983, pp. 235-238.

¹⁰⁰ *Ivi.*, p. 238.

connection with the problem of *novelty*. "Will" is not a substance, not a force, and Free-Will is not a supernatural power, but *consists* in the novelty contained in an activity-situation, as the following text makes explicit:

"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. I owe all my doctrines on this subject to Renouvier; and Renouvier, as I understand him, is (or at any rate then was) an out and out phenomenist, a denier of 'forces' in the most strenuous sense. [...]. The misinterpretation probably arose at first from my defending (after Renouvier) the indeterminism of our efforts. 'Free will' was supposed by my critics to involve a supernatural agent. As a matter of plain history the only 'free will' I have ever thought of defending is the character of novelty in fresh activity-situations."¹⁰¹

Renouvier was no more there to comment, but his reservations, in 1888, are enough to get an idea of what he would have objected.

- *The stream of thought*. Another major difference concerns the *continuity of consciousness*. It is an important thesis of the *Principles* that the stream of thought is continuous. This is topical for James's account of mind as well as for the methods of psychology, since the confusion between the different clear-cut concepts of the analyst and the "vague" of most of our mental states is what James names the "Psychologist's Fallacy"¹⁰². Renouvier, commenting on *Some Omissions of Introspective Psychology* (a 1884 paper containing the substance of Ch. IX of the *Principles*, "The Stream of thought"), objected to James's statements on the "stream" and on the continuity of that latter: Renouvier's objection was Kantian at heart, for James's claim in his view would prevent in advance any attempt to speak rationally of our intellectual powers:

"The human, psychical function, is rational only by virtue of groupings of phenomena under different categorical functions, which bring order and classification into the manifold of these impressions and ideas—forming, as they do, an apparent infinity. There, it seems to me, are the file-leaders which guide the sensible phenomena, as they are the stakes and surveyor's marks for

¹⁰¹ ERE, 1912, p. 184, p. 93, n.

¹⁰² See PP, vol. 1, Ch. 9.

the understanding. How can we classify and create science in psychology, without recognizing an intellectual basis for such general terms as *where, who, when, what, for what, by what, etc.*?"¹⁰³

This time, the very foundation of James's approach to consciousness was at stake, and the reply was sharp and firm:

"You accuse me of bringing *To apeiron* into the mind, whose functions are essentially discrete. The categoric concepts you speak of are concepts of objects. [...] But before it is reflected on, consciousness is *felt*, and as such is continuous, that is, potentially allows us to make sections anywhere in it, and treat the included portion as a unit. [...] But as we divide *them* arbitrarily, so I say our divisions of consciousness are arbitrary results of conceptual handling of it on our part. The ordinary psychology, on the contrary, insists that it is naturally discrete and that the divisions *belong* in certain places. This seems to me like saying that space exists in cubes or pyramids, apart from our construction."¹⁰⁴

What was then the image of James's works by that time, from a Renouvieran standpoint? The will-to-believe papers would be retained, and some parts of the papers on the will, but crucial arguments, involving the physiological processes in psychology—James's views on consciousness, on emotion, his methodological recommendations—would have to be dismissed. This interpretive standpoint will be reinforced by other contributors: it would not be possible to give an account of the way James was presented in the *Critique* without mentioning briefly two other minor authors: François Pillon and Lionel Dauriac. The *Critique Philosophique* was a collective undertaking, and the picture would not be complete enough with Renouvier as its only protagonist. More importantly, when the debate over pragmatism was at its highest, Renouvier had already died. Although Renouvier is the source of most of the objections Pillon and Dauriac will raise, they were those who expressed a clear opposition to this aspect of James's philosophy, on behalf of Renouvier's immaterialism. In the light of our main argument, their reviews of James's works were instrumental in presenting his early writings as the core of his philosophy, and his later psychological and pragmatist writings as some misguided views, a reading which proved to be unfortunately influential. I shall thus be concerned, in this last section, with the way Pillon and Dauriac tried to

¹⁰³ CR to WJ, RMM, 1929, p. 204; Perry, *Thought*, vol. I, p. 697.

¹⁰⁴ WJ to CR, Sept 30, 1884, RMM, 1929, p. 206; transl. *Eps*, p. 403.

dismiss James's arguments.

6. Pillon and Dauriac

François Pillon, to whom the *Principles* are dedicated, is more a friend of James than a major philosophical interlocutor, and indeed James's correspondence sometimes point to Pillon as James's "only friend" in France.¹⁰⁵ As time went by, James, who made picturesque descriptions of him¹⁰⁶, was fascinated by Pillon's "domesticity", by his reluctance to leave his quarters. For example, he warned Hodgson, who considered Pillon as a possible lecturer: "you write of inviting Pillon, he is the best of men, but of that cat-like French domesticity that I doubt whether he would dare to enter a foreign land."¹⁰⁷ James stayed several times with the Pillons; first in 1883,¹⁰⁸ and again in 1893, but at this time the tone had grown more distant. He describes them, after his stay, as "the best of human beings both of them, but with that curious French timidity about the outer world which made me think of two mice living in a hollow cheese",¹⁰⁹ or, in another letter: "These little French bourgeois live like mice in a cheese—all right as they don't move outside."¹¹⁰ In 1905, James met them again, but the distance now seemed even wider: "I called on the poor Pillons yesterday P.M. & kissed them, but I am almost sorry I went—we have grown so far apart that the combination no longer existed. Their life is too narrow, though they are *coeurs d'or*"¹¹¹. James reviews Pillon's essays in *l'Année Philosophique* in 1892 and 1893,¹¹² and expresses only a mild appraisal: Pillon's essay on idealism "is well written and instructive", and his sixty notices for the books published are "full of pith and vigor", but at the same time, James remarks, Pillon holds "a language which might come from the mouth of a doctor of the Catholic church".¹¹³ In 1892, his long essay on Atomism was deemed an unsurpassable "short *vue d'ensemble* for students"

¹⁰⁵ CWJ 7, p. 540.

¹⁰⁶ "He is the most unpretending and genial of men, poor and shabby, with a plain looking & excellent wife, reads English but doesn't speak a word ...", CWJ 5, p. 501, 1884.

¹⁰⁷ CWJ 7, p. 254.

¹⁰⁸ CWJ 5, p. 422, Feb 1883.

¹⁰⁹ CWJ 7, p. 458.

¹¹⁰ CWJ 2, p. 272, Jul 24, 1893.

¹¹¹ CWJ 11, p. 49, May 28, 1905.

¹¹² ECR, pp. 423-36 (1892) and ECR, pp. 455-457 (1893).

¹¹³ *Ivi.*, p. 457.

use"¹¹⁴... In most of the cases, he is mainly a disciple, his attitude "is the pluralistic and phenomenistic one of M. Renouvier".¹¹⁵ Still, it is to Pillon that James wrote interesting descriptions of his own philosophical development, insisting each time on what made him part his way from Renouvier on important matters. His own philosophy was more "gothic" than "classic":

"I expect, on returning to the country, to begin the writing of a somewhat systematic book on philosophy—my humble view of the world—pluralistic, tychistic, empiricist, pragmatic, and ultra-gothic, i.e., non-classic in form. Renouvier, to whom I owe so much, still remains to me too classic in the general rationalism of his procedure."¹¹⁶

In the same way, James gave Pillon a vivid picture of his "tychism" in the making, claiming that his own picture assumed a finite universe, without making of it the most salient point of this *Weltanschauung*, as Renouvier had done:

"My philosophy is what I call a radical empiricism, a pluralism, a "tychism," which represents order as being gradually won and always in the making. It is theistic, but not *essentially so*. It rejects all doctrines of the Absolute. It is finitist; but it does not attribute to the question of the Infinite the great methodological importance which you and Renouvier attribute to it."¹¹⁷

Against James's treatment of emotions Pillon urged nearly the same argument as Renouvier.¹¹⁸ In his eyes, James's account of emotions was either untenable or it was a platitude. In the strong form, it is untenable: it is not possible to state that moral pain and pleasure are *direct* awarenesses of changes in brain cells: we are not "conscious" of these changes. If the thesis means that emotional states and brain states might be *correlated*, this is nothing but the weak traditional Cartesian thesis, and anybody would agree with that. Pillon expressed further doubts concerning the possible division of moral emotions into "cerebral" and "peripheral", so that "if it must be allowed that M. James's theory does not apply to every affective state, it cannot be argued that he has

¹¹⁴ *Ivi.*, p. 435.

¹¹⁵ *Ivi.*, p. 432.

¹¹⁶ CWJ, 10, p. 279.

¹¹⁷ CWJ, 10, p. 410.

¹¹⁸ AP, 1902, "Review of G. Dumas (Ed), *W. James, La théorie de l'émotion*, Paris, 1903", pp. 156-158.

won the day".¹¹⁹ The same line of thinking was adopted in later papers,¹²⁰ and Pillon urged the same criticisms as Renouvier against the continuity of consciousness, in nearly the same words.¹²¹ Pillon implied that James's development, after 1900, was opposed to the spirit of Renouvier's criticism. The most telling statement can be found in a review of Th. Flournoy's *La philosophie de William James* (1912)¹²²: referring to the letter from James to Flournoy we quoted above, where James said that Renouvier was a representative of one of the great philosophical attitudes, "that of insisting on logically intelligible formulas",¹²³ Pillon added: "These are curious remarks indeed. They explain why the American philosopher, not being content with Renouvier's philosophical attitude, which aimed at explaining things in an intelligible manner for our thought, was naturally lead to abandon any hope of logical understanding, and, as a result, to conclude to anti-intellectualism, pragmatism and radical empiricism."¹²⁴

Although he had praised the *Varieties of Religious Experience* in private correspondence,¹²⁵ Pillon made a critical review of the French translation of the *Varieties* in *L'Année Philosophique* for 1905,¹²⁶ where he expressed clear doubts, and even an "opposition", concerning James's overall pragmatic

¹¹⁹ AP, 1902, p. 158

¹²⁰ AP, 1906, pp. 90-96; see also AP, 1909, p. 196.

¹²¹ "On ne saurait mieux saisir ni mieux faire comprendre l'importance qu'il faut accorder, dans l'ouvrage, au chapitre XI intitulé *Le courant de conscience*. Ce chapitre rapproche la psychologie de M. James de celle de M. Bergson. Il est inutile de dire que nous aurions des réserves à faire sur cette idée-image d'une continuité qui serait un caractère essentiel de la conscience, et qui réduirait à des abstractions formées par une sorte de morcelage les éléments psychiques que les premières analyses du sens commun y ont distingués." AP, 1909, pp. 195-196 (Review of the 1909 French translation of James's brief *Psychology*).

¹²² "Review of Flournoy, *La philosophie de William James*, Saint Blaise, 1912." AP, 1912, p. 275.

¹²³ CWJ, 7, p. 318.

¹²⁴ AP, 1912, p. 275. See also AP, 1900, pp. 111-116, on James's alleged confusion between "substance" and "person". AP, 1912, "La quatrième antinomie de Kant et l'idée de premier commencement", pp. 63-120; esp. pp. 116-120, on some differences between James and Renouvier over "first beginnings" and "substance". AP, 1913, pp. 202-203, in the review of *L'idée de vérité* (French title for *The Meaning of Truth*), Pillon mentions only a part of "The pragmatist account of truth and its misunderstanders", where James allows that the term "pragmatism" might have been ill chosen, inasmuch as it seems to overlook theoretical concerns.

¹²⁵ CWJ 10, pp. 106-108. The appraisal of VRE concerns esp. Ch. XVIII and XX. Pillon introduces Abauzit as a possible translator.

¹²⁶ AP, 1905, pp. 214-219.

orientation. He focused on Chapter XI ("Spéculation", in the French translation, and "Philosophy" in the original) where James had applied for the first time the pragmatic method to the traditional proofs for the attributes of God.¹²⁷ James's pragmatism is equated, here, with the general utilitarian standpoint: "We would have serious reservations to make concerning this critique and the systematically empiricist and utilitarian philosophy from which it proceeds."¹²⁸ Even where the two men seemed to agree, on the impersonality of science as opposed to the personalism which is central to the religious standpoint (and to Renouvier's final philosophy), Pillon's approach was at odds with James's:

"(This conclusion) can be drawn, we believe, more clearly and with more necessity from neo-criticist idealism than from radical empiricism. What philosophical value can be assigned to the impersonalism of Science, when one realizes, through the critique of matter and space, that the work of science only applies to the order of appearances resulting from the constitution of our sensibility; that it cannot claim to have reached, even partially, the actual bottom of things; and that its tendency to depersonalize beings must precisely lead it to misunderstand and deny the true principles of nature?"¹²⁹

What is not clear is whether this immaterialist approach was an alternative to James's view or whether it was implied by some points of his philosophy. This is confirmed by the review of *Pragmatism*. Pillon was much dubious about James's account of truth in *Pragmatism*, and thought that, in every field of knowledge, "looking-forward" truths had to be balanced by "looking-backwards" truths; in other terms, that there were categorical truths and truths of observation which were not explained in James's account. The only positive point was in the "Third Lecture" where, "the present reviewer finds with pleasure the spirit of phenomenist neo-criticism in the pages devoted to the

¹²⁷ James's 1898 lecture, where he first introduced the term, had only limited circulation.

¹²⁸ AP, 1905, p. 217.

¹²⁹ *Ivi.*, p. 219. See also, AP, 1908, "Review of *Science et religion*, by Emile Boutroux", and some developments about James, pp. 120-138 (and p. 193 n.). More general statements on pragmatism can be found in AP, 1909, pp. 209-211. Pillon opposes the truth of science and the truth of philosophy. The latter is "absolute" while the former can be said, "pragmatic": "la vérité de la science proprement dite est relative et symbolique: elle représente le réel sous un aspect, en une forme qui vient de notre sensibilité. Conforme aux conditions, aux fins, aux besoins, de l'action dans la vie présente, elle peut très bien être dite *pragmatique*." (AP, 1909, p. 211)

problem of *Substance*".¹³⁰ So much so that the common character of Pillon's criticisms is that: there are some insights in James, but the latter was prevented to make proper use of them because of his prejudices in favor of empiricism. For Pillon, most of James's claims would be better secured on the foundations Renouvier had helped to lay.

This opposition, explicitly founded on the commitment to a special school of philosophy, is even clearer in Dauriac. Even though James read his essays with interest, he does not seem to hold Dauriac in high esteem. Dauriac's "style lacks the clearness of that of Pillon and the weight of that of Renouvier."¹³¹ An important "lieutenant" of Renouvier, Dauriac makes frequent references to James, but their overall tone is far more critical than that of Renouvier and Pillon. I will not get into the particulars of his reading of James, for it is much less influent than that of Renouvier, but there are two distinct ranges of criticisms: against James's psychology, against pragmatism in general (and thus against James as a leading character in that movement). Two clear examples can be provided. For example, reviewing, in 1891, *The Principles of Psychology*,¹³² he devoted a large part of the—long—paper to the criticism of James's physiological stance, whose implications he was not ready to accept.

"Would it be to betray the cause we were just advocating if we went so far as to say that consciousness has to be identified not just with a secretion, but with a sort (*horresco referens*) of excrement of the brain? When one is not terrified at such a term anymore, the very *idea* of physiological psychology will have reached its culmination."¹³³

According to Dauriac, such a standpoint had to be dismissed, if James wished to remain consistent with his early views, in particular those published in the *Critique*: "M. James has too much written in the columns of the former *Critique*, not to be considered, at least, as a half-criticist."¹³⁴ In the same way, Dauriac objected to James's theory of emotions, not by finding faults within it,

¹³⁰ AP, 1911, p. 214.

¹³¹ ECR, p. 435. Dauriac is mentioned by W.J. CWJ 10, pp. 409-10 (To Pillon, 12 June 1904); CWJ 10, p. 619. Dauriac is mentioned by Papini, CWJ 11, p. 599, 1906.

¹³² AP, 1891, paper by Lionel Dauriac, "Du positivisme en psychologie: A propos des *Principes de Psychologie* de M. William James," pp. 209-252.

¹³³ *Ivi.*, p. 229.

¹³⁴ *Ivi.*, p. 209.

but by rejecting at once James's philosophical presuppositions.¹³⁵ He criticized the physiological account of emotions provided by James, and tried to prove that what James took to be the main content of emotions—some organic movements following directly some perceptions—was in fact the physiological echo of a psychological phenomenon. This was obviously begging the question, but it was explicitly so, since Dauriac thought that James's account needed to be "demolished", "on behalf of the immaterialist phenomenism and, by way of consequence, of the philosophy in the name of which we have kept fighting, and which postulates the psychological side of emotion as an essential character."¹³⁶

After 1900, as James develops his own radical empiricism, and as controversies about pragmatism become a prominent element in philosophical journals, the general line of Dauriac's remarks grows more critical. To make room for practice among the main truths of philosophy, for Dauriac, meant to give up the philosophical task.¹³⁷ Accordingly, he often described pragmatism as a form of coarse irrationalism.¹³⁸ In a long paper on Bergson's philosophy,¹³⁹ he quoted Bergson's claim that intelligence was connected to the necessities of action, which prompted incisive criticisms of pragmatism: "the author develops with rare skill this definitely new thesis of one of the newest and of the boldest types of contemporary philosophy, where pragmatism is in germ and not only pragmatism. Taken at its face value, pragmatism is connected to the necessities of action and does not try to know whether these necessities are, or are not, constant. It does not care. Pragmatism covers every truth, which comes back to the claim that it is not only the opponent of some philosophies, but also of *any* philosophy."¹⁴⁰ This interpretation of pragmatism as "irrationalism" was urged

¹³⁵ AP, 1892, pp. 63-76

¹³⁶ *Ivi.*, p. 76.

¹³⁷ Lionel Dauriac, "Questions préliminaires: L'objet de la philosophie; le commencement de la philosophie", AP, 1910, pp. 159-186, esp. 184-186.

¹³⁸ A point can be made that it was already the case in his reading of James's very first texts. See L. Dauriac, *Croyance et réalité*, Alcan, Paris, 1889, p. 274.

¹³⁹ AP, 1911, La Philosophie de M. Henri Bergson, p. 69.

¹⁴⁰ AP, 1911, p. 69. See also his Review of William James, *The Meaning of Truth. Revue Philosophique*, 1910, pp. 643-649. I am here concerned with *CP* and *AP*, but the reader should be aware that Dauriac also developed critical views in the *Revue philosophique: Positivisme et pragmatisme, criticisme et pragmatisme*, 1911, pp. 584-605; *Le Pragmatisme et le réalisme du sens commun*, 1911, pp. 337-367; Review of A. W. Moore, *Pragmatism and Its Critics*, 1911, pp. 546-552; Review of F.C.S. Schiller, *Riddles of the Sphinx*, 3rd ed.,

again in one of the last issues of *l'Année Philosophique*.¹⁴¹ This time, James's tychism was guilty of removing any possibility of refutation from his system: "What is "tychism"? I shall offer this definition: "it is the philosophy of the *as such* (*philosophie du sic!*)."¹⁴² Do you not understand? I shall say, then: "it is the philosophy of the fact, meaning behind which there is nothing, except perhaps other facts likely to contradict it, and in that case the contradiction is just registered [...]" I am aware that I am here exaggerating William James's theses, but I am following their own direction."¹⁴²

7. Conclusion

At the end of this survey, I hope that I made clearer the "distortion" I was hinting at the beginning. James's first texts are published by a philosopher whose views are already settled and to whose philosophy his collaborators are already committed. Typically, James's early texts, which in their spirit are very close to Renouvier's views, are welcome and much use is made of them. Then, a strange situation develops: the *Critique*, which is James's "tribune" in France, as it were, is, because of its philosophical commitments, at odds with several of the main trends in James's thought. This is particularly clear as regards the psychology, whose cornerstones are dismissed by Renouvier first, and then by Pillon and Dauriac. Some themes in the *Varieties*, in particular the criticism of the im-personalism of science, were congenial to the personalist spirit of the *Critique*, but the way in which James reached his own conclusions was not acceptable to Pillon and Dauriac: the pragmatist philosophical background seemed ill-chosen to them. Thus, the journal where most of James's texts were available had turned critical of James's pragmatism. The last remarks by Dauriac we have quoted are just making more explicit the general problem involved by James: the mystery of a philosopher who had started in the same atmosphere as them but who had gradually developed in different, if not opposite, directions.

If we add these remarks to other insights gained by the examination of what Boutroux and Bergson did with James's works, a common aspect emerges: James was introduced to French readers by "settled" philosophers. The "first

1911, pp. 541-546; Review of William James, *Introduction à la philosophie* (= SPP), 1915, pp. 557-561 (See in particular pp. 557-58 on Renouvier's legacy).

¹⁴¹ In a review of Henri Reverdin, *La notion d'expérience d'après William James*, AP, 1913, pp. 216-218.

¹⁴² *Ivi.*, p. 218.

wave" generated interesting philosophical moves—they made a genuine philosophical use of James's texts—but they certainly did not allow a comprehensive view of James's thought; his works were mainly instrumental for purposes which were independent of his own development. The first full scale survey of James's thought, a survey which took into account James's radical empiricism, made by a philosopher who "started with" James was certainly Jean Wahl's thesis, *Les Philosophies pluralistes d'Angleterre et d'Amérique*¹⁴³, but this was in 1920, when the whole debate concerning pragmatism was in a large measure over.♦

¹⁴³ Alcan, Paris, 1920; new edition with an introduction: *Les empêcheurs de penser en rond*, Paris, 2005. For a little sketch of Jean Wahl's works and life, see my foreword to Jean Wahl, *Vers le concret*, Vrin, Paris, new revised edition, 2004.

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