The Unity of William James's Thought

Wesley Cooper
The Unity of
William James's Thought
THE VANDERBILT LIBRARY OF AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY offers interpretive perspectives on the historical roots of American philosophy and on present innovative developments in American thought, including studies of values, naturalism, social philosophy, cultural criticism, and applied ethics.

Series Editors
Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr., General Editor
(Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis)
Cornelis de Waal, Associate Editor
(Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis)

Editorial Advisory Board
Kwame Anthony Appiah (Harvard)
Larry Hickman (Southern Illinois University)
John Lachs (Vanderbilt)
John J. McDermott (Texas A&M)
Joel Porte (Cornell)
Hilary Putnam (Harvard)
Ruth Anna Putnam (Wellesley)
Beth J. Singer (Brooklyn College)
John J. Stuhr (Pennsylvania State)
The Unity of William James's Thought

Wesley Cooper

Vanderbilt University Press
Nashville
for kate
Preface xi

1. Introduction: James’s Philosophical System 1
   James’s Beans 1
   Seven Obstacles 11
   A Brief Biography 28
   Methodological Considerations 33

2. Consciousness I: The Two-Levels View 36
   Four Interpretations 36
   Protomental and Essentially Mental 40
   Naturalism 45
   Phenomenology 52
   Panpsychism 59
   Neutral Monism 63
   The Case for Panpsychism 64
   Empirical and Metaphysical Reality 67
   Conclusion 71

3. Consciousness II: Mental Causation 74
   Introduction 74
   Simultaneous Nomic Equivalents 76
   Epiphenomenalism 81
   Materialism 83
   Anomalism 87
   Emotions 92
   Conclusion 96
## Contents

4  **Consciousness III: Mind Dust**  97  
   Sciousness  97  
   Mind Dust  99  
   The Connection Principle  100  
   The Taylor-Wozniak Interpretation  102  
   *Esse Est Sentiri*  106  
   Conclusion  110  

5  **The Self: Its Freedom and Unity**  111  
   Self, God, and Mysticism  111  
   Myers’s Mystery  111  
   The Two-Levels Analysis of the Self  114  
   The Self in *The Principles*  115  
   Scientific and Metaphysical Levels  117  
   James’s Shoehorn  120  
   The Spiritual Self  121  
   The Original Force  123  
   Empirical and Metaphysical Thinkers  126  
   Two Conceptions of Self-Synthesis  127  
   Self-Definition and the Closest-Continuer Theory  129  
   The Active Self  132  
   James’s Radical-Empiricist Mysticism  133  

6  **God: Imminent Purpose**  137  
   Slipping into Pure Experience  137  
   God’s Place in the Two-Levels View  139  
   Purposive Structure  140  
   Dogmatic versus Pragmatic Theology  141  
   Pragmatic Toleration of Overbelief  144  
   Analogizing to a Higher Purpose  147  
   A Pantheistic Theism  147  
   A Real God?  149
Contents

7 The Mystical: Its Role in the Two-Levels View 152
   Poohbahism Redux 152
   Self, Subjectivity, and Privacy 154
   Mysticism and Science 157
   Gale’s Critique of Absolute Truth 163
   Pure Experience Revisited 165

8 Pragmatism I: Pragmatism and Radical Empiricism 168
   The Serpent’s Trail 168
   Ramsifying Pure Experience 171
   The Tightly Wedged Mind 173
   Functionalism, Global Functionalism, and Ramsey Sentences 175
   Mentalistic and Nonmentalistic Phenomenalism 177
   Intermediary and Nonintermediary Phenomena 178
   Embracing a Reductio? 182
   James’s Blues Dispelled 185
   Conclusion 186

9 Pragmatism II: Meaning 188
   Pragmatic Meaning 188
   Meaning or Conception 189
   Shuttling Again 192

10 Pragmatism III: Belief 195
    The “Master Syllogism” 195
    Maximizing Desire Satisfaction 198
    One World or Many? 201

11 Pragmatism IV: Rationality and Truth 204
   Constraining Subjectivity 206
   Absolute Truth and Half-Truth 208
   Two Dimensions of Macroagency 211
   The Logic of Subjectivity in Belief 215
   Realism and Correspondence 219
   Conclusion 220