

This article was downloaded by: [University of Edinburgh]

On: 07 July 2014, At: 06:14

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954
Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH,
UK



British Journal for the History of Philosophy

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rbjh20>

Was James Ward a Cambridge Pragmatist?

Jeremy Dunham^a

^a University of Edinburgh

Published online: 04 Jul 2014.

To cite this article: Jeremy Dunham (2014): Was James Ward a Cambridge Pragmatist?, British Journal for the History of Philosophy, DOI: [10.1080/09608788.2014.928609](https://doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2014.928609)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09608788.2014.928609>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly

forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

ARTICLE

WAS JAMES WARD A CAMBRIDGE PRAGMATIST?¹

Jeremy Dunham

Although the Cambridge Professor of Mental Philosophy and Logic James Ward was once one of Britain's most highly regarded Psychologists and Philosophers, today his work is unjustly neglected. This is because his philosophy is frequently misrepresented as a reactionary anti-naturalistic idealist theism. In this article, I argue, first, that this reading is false, and that by viewing Ward through the lens of pragmatism we obtain a fresh interpretation of his work that highlights the scientific nature of his philosophy and his original and promising theory of 'evolutionary Kantianism', with its applications to the philosophy of mind, epistemology, and metaphysics. Second, I show that reading Ward as a pragmatist provides us with (1) a more complex history of the reception of pragmatism at Cambridge at the turn of the twentieth century than the straightforwardly hostile one traditionally told; and (2) a more detailed understanding of the wide range of philosophical problems to which pragmatism was deemed at this time to have an appropriate application.

KEYWORDS: Ward; James; pragmatism; idealism; evolution

At the turn of the twentieth century, James Ward (1843–925) was Britain's most well respected psychologist and one of its most prominent philosophers. He developed his reputation in the 1880s with a series of articles on psychology (Ward, 'A General Analysis of Mind'; 'Psychological Principles I'; 'Psychological Principles II'; 'Psychological Principles III'), including his 1886 epoch-making entry for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.² Between

¹This article was written during a postdoctoral research fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh. I am grateful to the Institute for providing an atmosphere so conducive to research. I would also like to thank Pauline Phemister, Iain Hamilton Grant, Andrew Pyle, Roberto Gronda, two anonymous referees, and the editor of the *Journal* for their invaluable input and encouragement. I must also thank David Palfrey for helping me locate and navigate James Ward's unpublished manuscripts.

²Dawes Hicks ('Prof. Ward's Psychological Principles', 2) wrote that

1896 and 1898 he gave two exceptionally well-received series of the prestigious Gifford lectures at the University of Aberdeen.³ On the strength of these works, Ward was appointed the first Professor of Mental Philosophy and Logic, at Trinity College, Cambridge; a position later held by Moore and Wittgenstein. Today, historians of philosophy classify Ward as a British idealist (see Basile, 'James Ward'; Neary, 'James Ward'; Dunham, Grant, and Watson, *Idealism*).⁴ In this article, I ask whether he was also a Cambridge Pragmatist.

Understanding Ward as a pragmatist has two important revisionary consequences. The first concerns the legacy and early reception of pragmatism. If it is true that the holder of the most highly regarded philosophy chair at Cambridge at the turn of the twentieth century defended a form of pragmatism, then it provides us with a rather different story of pragmatism's early history in this university than the standard straightforwardly 'hostile' one, driven by Russell and Moore's fierce critiques (see Misak, *American Pragmatists*, 101–03). This revised story perhaps also explains why despite these attacks, their successors were more receptive.⁵ The second concerns Ward's own legacy. I show that examining Ward's work from the perspective of pragmatism reveals the more naturalistic and defensible aspects of his philosophy that have been historically ignored through the misinterpretation of his work as a mere *reactionary* theistic idealism (Perry, 'Recent Philosophical Procedure with Reference to Science'; Lamprecht, 'James Ward's

[t]he *Encyclopaedia* article came at an opportune moment and signalized a complete revolt from the school of which Bain was the last representative. No sooner was it published than it was recognized as a contribution to the science of first-rate value; it laid the foundation, in fact, of the best psychological work that has been done in this country during the last quarter of a century.

See also Brett, *History of Psychology*, 229–39.

³Published in 1899 as *Naturalism and Agnosticism*. In his review, Taylor wrote 'one may assert without much fear of contradiction that Prof. Ward's Gifford Lectures are the philosophical book of the last year' ('Critical Notice of *Naturalism and Agnosticism*', 244). Due to this work's international popularity, in 1904 Ward was invited to California by the American idealist George Holmes Howison to discuss his work with the Philosophical Union. The newspaper clippings found among Ward's personal papers show that his trip to America was extraordinary. He gave a plenary lecture at the world congress of philosophy, dined with President Roosevelt at the Whitehouse, and gave numerous public lectures across the country. The clippings record that he shocked the locals with his 'iconoclastic' views regarding the possible 'remodelling of Christianity' and the creation of an altogether new religion. To see copies of these clippings, please contact the author.

⁴The best earlier summaries of Ward's work are Dawes Hicks ('Philosophy of James Ward'), Cunningham (*Idealistic Argument*, 169–201), Murray (*Philosophy of James Ward*), and Passmore (*Hundred Years of Philosophy*, 81–84). On British Idealism see Mander (*British Idealism*) and Boucher and Vincent (*British Idealism*). On the relationship between British idealism and early analytic philosophy, see Candlish (*Russell/Bradley Dispute*), Hylton (*Russell, Idealism*), and Mander (*British Idealism*, 526–56).

⁵Such as Wittgenstein and Frank Ramsey (see Misak, *Cambridge Pragmatism*).

Critique of Naturalism'; Mace, 'Ward, James'; Wall, 'John Venn, James Ward'). Ward was, like the classical pragmatists Charles Sanders Peirce and William James, a laboratory man⁶ and emphasized the importance of experience and experimentation. His philosophy is deeply informed by his understanding of science, particularly the developments of late nineteenth-century biology and psychology. By paying close attention to these developments and providing a careful, logical, and general analysis of mind and experience, Ward's work on 'psychology' set the tone for the practice of analytic philosophy of mind throughout the twentieth century.⁷ Analytic philosophy is sometimes understood as a scientific philosophy based on rigorous argumentation. However, by overemphasis of this latter fact there has been a tendency to consider it reducible to the philosophy of logic or language alone, at the expense of the remaining sciences (see Klein, 'Science, Religion, and the Will to Believe'). If we accept that the scientific character of scientific philosophy extends beyond formal logic to sciences such as biology and psychology, then, as we shall see, when the pragmatist aspects of Ward's philosophy are highlighted, his place in the history of early analytic philosophy should no longer be regarded as reactionary, but, in fact, revolutionary.

This article will proceed in two main stages, both of which will show how a distinctive element of Ward's pragmatism develops from his understanding of the 'primacy of the practical'. In the first, I show how Ward uses this primacy to develop an 'evolutionary Kantianism'.⁸ This theory is Kantian only to the extent that it regards the concepts of the understanding as necessary conditions for the possibility of 'organized' experience. It diverges significantly from traditional Kantianism by insisting that this conceptual

⁶In the early 1870s, Ward spent a year working in Leipzig with the German physiologist Carl Ludwig. When he returned to Cambridge, he studied in Michael Foster's Physiology lab, the first experimental biology lab in Britain, established in 1870 (Coleman, *Biology in the Nineteenth Century*, 5). His publications from this research include 'Animal Locomotion' and 'Physiology of the Nervous System'.

⁷Wall ('John Venn, James Ward') argued that Ward's work lacked influence because of the little contact he had with Cambridge's students. However, Ward's writings on Psychology, especially his *Encyclopaedia* article, were the essential starting point for students of 'mental philosophy' (today called 'philosophy of mind'), whether or not they were taught by him. These writings were compulsory readings, for example, for Moore's course attended by Wittgenstein. Interestingly, Goodman (*Wittgenstein and William James*) attributes Wittgenstein's reading of Ward's *Encyclopaedia* article as one of the major sources for his learning of James's ideas, and claims that the article is greatly influenced by James. Goodman fails to note that the original publication of the article preceded James's *Principles of Psychology* by four years and Ward's work is frequently cited in James's *Principles*. Much of the work in the *Encyclopaedia* article was also originally included in Ward's earlier 1883 articles, which James also read. James and Ward first met in 1880, they worked on very similar themes during the same period, and they frequently corresponded. Towards the end of James's life they became close friends (see Perry, *Thought and Character of William James*, 637–57 and Sokal's introduction to KWJ XIV xxxvii–viii).

⁸I borrow this term from Kuklick (*Rise of American Philosophy*) who uses it to describe James's pragmatism (cf. Carlson, 'James and the Kantian Tradition').

architecture is not given preformed, but is the product of historical processes driven by natural and cultural evolution. I argue that both Ward and James use this theory to emphasize the ineliminable contribution of the practically driven embodied and socially embedded human agent for the acquisition and development of knowledge. The second section examines how this theory both informs and is developed in Ward's 'scientific' metaphysical methodology. Although the pragmatist tradition is sometimes presented as anti-metaphysical (Seigfried, 'Pragmatist Metaphysics?'; Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*), I argue that understanding how Ward's philosophy relates to metaphysics as pursued by James and Peirce is essential for grasping both the full nature of his own pragmatism and how pragmatism as a philosophy was understood in the early twentieth century. Furthermore, the character of *pragmatic* metaphysics has several virtues and contemporary metaphysicians could do well to reconsider its promising methodology. Therefore, contemporary pragmatists should not be embarrassed by their tradition's metaphysical past.

1. EVOLUTION, PSYCHOLOGY, AND KNOWLEDGE

From his earliest works, Ward insisted that those who take Darwinian evolution seriously and recognize its importance for genetic psychology must accept the subservience of theoretical knowledge to the practical. The pursuit of knowledge has always been motivated by practical needs rather than mere curiosity (Ward, 'Psychological Principles I', 153–4). This is shown, both psychologically and physically, by the fact that the 'inlets to knowledge are primarily subservient to the inlets for food and air, which they encircle' (PP 20). However, his more substantial understanding of the primacy of the practical is made clear in his *Naturalism and Agnosticism's* 'Refutation of Dualism' (NA 389–494). This 'refutation', rather than being aimed simply at Descartes, attacks all of the pernicious dualisms that Ward thought were halting progress in the philosophy of mind. These include Kant's dualisms between sense and understanding, individual and universal knowledge, as well as the dualism between the practical and the theoretical. For all, the primacy of the practical is used by Ward as the foundation for a genetic account that explains how the latter 'evolves' *epigenetically* from the former. He argues that by understanding how the 'sense-knowledge' of the individual is pre-eminently practical, we can come to comprehend how the intellectual, theoretical, and universal developed. As I demonstrate in §1.1, the result of this argument is a distinctly 'evolutionary' Kantianism which makes plain the pragmatic and scientific nature of his philosophy that has been underemphasized in all previous commentaries on his work. It at once highlights his characteristically pragmatist defence of the human contribution to knowledge acquisition, and the crucial role that nineteenth-century developments in evolutionary science and

psychology played in his philosophy. In §1.2, I show how he develops this theory from his psychological analysis of mind and argue for its contemporary relevance. Once the principles of Ward's naturalist psychology that underlie his theory of knowledge have been made clear, I argue in §1.3 for the latter's distinctly *pragmatist* character by examining the relationship between Ward and James, the importance of psychology for their work on epistemology, and the connection between the primacy of the practical and the 'will to believe'.

1.1 Evolutionary Kantianism and the Genesis of Reason

The Kantian system's greatest virtue is, according to Ward, the supreme place it established for the activity of the subject for organizing the content of experience. However, Kant faulted by focusing exclusively on 'cognition' in the first *Critique* and through ignoring what Ward calls 'conation' altogether. 'Conation' is used to refer to Spinoza's *conatus* doctrine – that '[e]ach thing, insofar as it can by its own power, strives to persevere in its own being' (E III P6). For Ward, this striving is driven by interest. Although Kant made great progress in overcoming the excesses of both rationalism and empiricism through his synthetic unity of apperception, his theory suffers from a similar problem to the associationists', insofar as without conation, synthesis would remain blind (NA 425–6). Ward's argument against the associationists rests on his claim that *attention* must function prior to association. If it were not for the primacy of the practical in our experiential life, there could be no explanation for why certain patterns of presentations become associated rather than others; attention is driven towards the *interesting*, the uninteresting is ignored. Ward defines the 'interesting' as that which has an effect on our pursuit to persevere in our existence. Animals soon learn to ignore the sound of the passing train when they realize the loud sound is unaccompanied by an interesting effect. What psychologists at the turn of the twentieth century called the 'span of prehension' is limited; a process of subjective selection is always at play and directs both synthesis and association.

Conation begins with interacting individuals prior to the formation of language. Consequently, the primacy defended by Ward is fundamentally a primacy of practical *powers* rather than *reason*. However, he claims, 'as the race and the individual progress, the "motives" change, and with inter-subjective intercourse, reason and conscience emerge at length' (WSK 188). As this passage suggests, the intellectual forms or categories of thought used to organize experience are not biologically predetermined and structurally invariable dispositions, but the products of a history of inter-subjective interactions that began long before the origin of human language. Ward's mantra is that 'experience is a process of becoming expert by experiment' (WSK 179; WEP 256; PP 29; RE 35; 413; cf. PP 432, NA 452). The 'experimental' aspect of experience is suggested by its etymology (see NA 425–6; PP 29) and the suggestion of passive disinterested cognition

will always fail to take it into account. We pursue that which affects us positively, while we avoid or simply ignore that which does not. Investigation is prompted by interest, and knowledge is gained to the extent that we learn to successfully engage with that which interests. This evolutionary theory of knowledge is *pragmatic* because knowledge both arises through our *practical* engagements with the world and has value because of its *practical* consequences:

So far the true is the useful, and the criterion is not theoretical but practical. Looking broadly at the progress of life, as it ascends through the animal kingdom and onwards through the history of man, it seems safe to say that knowledge is always a means to ends, is never an end by itself – till at length it becomes interesting and satisfying in itself.

(PP 21; cf. RE 414–15)

Although this theory is driven by the Spinozist theory of conation, Ward was no rationalist and firmly categorized himself as an empiricist.⁹ This is not because he objected to the ‘intellectualism’ of rationalism per se, but rather the failure to account for the origin of intellectual forms or categories through processes of living experience, i.e. through the deeds and interactions of the individual personalities of the *dramatis personae* and their repeated trials, failures, and eventual triumphant successes in dealing with their environment. He writes:

There will be no laws, prior to these agents, making them what they are; but they, being what they are, their action and interaction, will result in uniformity and order. Habit, dexterity, and familiarity do not precede experience, but arise in the course of it: language and custom, social status and obligation, originate and consolidate with the progress of society and are nothing apart from it.

(WEP 247)

This passage’s main claim can be summed up as *there is no structure without structuring activity*. The fact that this structuring activity must be driven by practical interests at once illustrates his understanding of the primacy of the practical and motivates his move to an *evolutionary* Kantianism. For this reason, his critique of *rationalism* highlights the link between his *pragmatism* and his *naturalism*. Ward argued that the problem with rationalism is that it follows a ‘logomorphic’ (as opposed to ‘anthropomorphic’) method inextricably linked to the out-dated model of biological development ‘preformationism’. The two theories are linked by rationalism because it understands logical categories as ‘preformed’, immutable, and ontologically a priori or serving as the ‘ground’ for real existents. Crucially, this logomorphism is evident as much in Kant’s ‘categorical a priori’ as it is with Leibniz’s

⁹Sometimes a radical empiricist, see RE 437.

windowless monad, and despite Kant's claim to provide an 'epigenesis of pure reason' (CPR B 167), his historically invariable system of categories is fundamentally incompatible with such an evolutionary theory. Ward's critique accurately identifies a major problem in Kant's system. Epigenesis is the progressive development of complex structures from a previously less complex material. It relies on environmental 'interactions' and results in the creation of 'new properties which its component factors in their previous isolation did not possess' (RE 102). However, Kant consistently, throughout his pre-critical and critical periods, believed that any genetic account of species or of the origin of natural forms would lead to ideas 'so monstrous that reason recoils before them' (AHE 135; cf. AHE 150–51). As I show in §1.2, it is in Ward's system that we find a true epigenesis of reason. For he argues that we can only take account of the way our experience is a product both of our embodiment and the way that our cognition is embedded in our social environment once it is conceived as the product of creative epigenesis (WEP 228). Experience is *embodied* because our intellectual forms are 'plastic' and 'wherever there is psychological plasticity there is also neural plasticity ... Biologically the two are inseparable' (PP 99). It is *embedded* because intersubjective interaction is essential for the development of self-consciousness and the intellectual forms which we use to communicate (TM 31).

1.2 Psychological Analysis and Biology

It follows that although it is fair to call Ward an idealist, it would be wrong to classify him as a member of the subjectivist camp that considers reality as reducible to the subjective modifications of individual egos. This is clarified when we examine his psychological analysis of mind. Like both James and Peirce, Ward begins from the anti-sceptical position that asserts we must begin from where we are: *in mediis rebus*. The starting point of his analysis, therefore, is the interaction of subject and object. We cannot say *ego sum*, he insists, without *id est* (TM 30). Although my aim in this section is to emphasize the relationship between Ward's psychology and nineteenth-century biology and how this specific form of naturalism ultimately leads to a pragmatic theory of knowledge, it is worth noting in passing that the similarities between Ward's analysis and the act-object distinction used as the foundation of his student Moore's 'Refutation of Idealism' should be clear. In Ward's terminology, there must be a distinction between the active subject and the qualitatively distinguishable presentations to which this subject attends, but neither side is conceivable in isolation. Furthermore, there are three characteristics essential to any concrete psychological state: attention, presentation, and feeling. These must not be regarded as individual 'faculties' (Ward, 'Psychological Principles II', 485), but rather they form an organic whole and are only logically distinguishable. The role of *attention* requires an active subject, the role of *presentation* necessitates an external object, and *feeling* emphasizes the *affective interaction* between subject and

object. From this it follows, he argues, that Kant's greatest mistake was to treat (1) the theoretical or cognitive, (2) the practical or conative, and (3) the emotional as objects of three separate *Critiques*; 'Kant's three critiques', he writes, 'must be combined into one' (NA 425). Again, it is important to highlight that Ward's evolutionary revision of Kantianism entails that the *one* these three critiques are combined into is an *organic whole*. The final fundamental claim of his psychological analysis is that our experiences are 'processes' not 'products'. 'Change' is the fundamental objective fact in our experience of an 'enduring now' and these processes are practically driven by conation. However, this fundamental enactivism depends on and is inseparable from our embodied nature and our embeddedness within our environment.

To start with the objective side of experience, Ward argued that the analogy between mind and chemistry posited by most nineteenth-century psychologists, which suggests that our conscious experience is somehow the sum of mental atoms, is fundamentally misleading. The objects of our perception do not form a set of decomposable presentations or a disconnected manifold (NA 478), but are rather a *presentational continuum*; not an aggregation of molecules, but a gradually differentiated organic whole (Ward, 'Psychological Principles II', 479). While chemical compounds can be disassociated, mental compounds cannot. Therefore, the biological analogy captures this essential mental irreversibility in a way the chemical one never could. He argues that Karl Ernst Von Baer's law of biological development, which states that 'the homogeneous, coarsely structured, general, and potential develops into the heterogeneous, finely built, special and determined' (Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, 61), is as important to mental development as to biological development, and this allows us to speak of a psychoplasm analogous to the bioplasm.¹⁰ In Ward's presentational continuum or psychoplasm

¹⁰The term 'Bioplasm' or 'Protoplasm' was used at the turn of the century to describe the 'sticky fluid' inside living cells. As Mayr states, it dropped out of use after the introduction of the electron microscope showed 'what a complex aggregation of structures the cell contents are, with functions undreamed of by the early students of protoplasm' (*Growth of Biological Thought*, 654). A useful definition of protoplasm, which suggests how Ward would have understood this term, is found in the 1895 *Century Dictionary*. It is

An albuminoid substance, ordinarily resembling the white of an egg, consisting of carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, and hydrogen in extremely complex and unstable molecular combination, and capable, under proper conditions, of manifesting certain vital phenomena, as spontaneous motion, sensation, assimilation, and reproduction, thus constituting the physical basis of all plants and animals.

(C VI 4799)

Fleshing out the analogy between 'bioplasm' and 'psychoplasm' Ward wrote that

Between the advance from the egg to the chicken and that from the child's mind to the man's, the parallel, *mutatis mutandis*, is very close. At the beginning pronounced homogeneity, plasticity, potentiality, rather than defined features; at the close pronounced

the earlier differentiations do not disappear like the waves of yesterday in the calm of today, nor yet last on like old scars between new ones; but rather the two are combined so that the whole field of consciousness, like a growing picture, increases indefinitely in complexity of pattern.

(PP 82)

The ‘irreducible minimum’ of the subjective side of experience is made up by ‘affectivity’ and ‘activity’. Of the three essential aspects of Ward’s analysis of experience, he claims that ‘affectivity’ or ‘feeling’ is the one most frequently ignored by other psychologists. It is usually either confused with its antecedent, presentation, or its consequent, attention, and rarely recognized as the distinct aspect that it surely is. We experience the presentational continuum as ceaselessly changing. Changes of *presentation* cause either pleasurable or painful subjective *feelings*, and as conative agents we react by endeavouring to maximize pleasurable encounters. Ward calls this endeavour ‘attention’. Although at life’s lower ranks attention is almost immediately attracted to the most intense sensations in the presentational continuum, advanced animals and mature human beings possess an ability to direct attention to future practical interests, rather than being restricted to the here and now. It was the mistake of the associationists to assume that attention is directed by presentational intensity alone (Ward, ‘A General Analysis of Mind’, 383). As Ward argues

[a] whole swarm of meteors might have streaked the sky unheeded while Ulysses, life in hand, steered between Scylla and Charybdis, just as all the din of the siege failed to distract Archimedes bent over the figures in the sand.

(PP 91)

It follows that a sensation’s *effective* intensity is not reducible to its *inherent* intensity and that it depends also on the ‘focus’ of attention. Ward distinguishes between the focus and ‘field’ of consciousness; all attention involves inattention due to the fact that despite the manifold changes in the field, there can only be one focus of attention at any one time. Attention to the interesting, i.e. the practically important, drives the progressive differentiation of the presentational

heterogeneity, structure, actuality—disclosing a person with unique traits ... *At every step* the subjective and the objective aspects, function and structure, the experient and the experience, mutually mould and modify each other.

(PP 410)

Although, protoplasm is an out-dated biological concept, the analogy is an important illumination both of Ward’s theory of a presentational continuum and his efforts to bring biology and psychology together. His rejection of the ‘mechanistic’ model of mental chemistry, therefore, should not be read as an attempt to distance psychology from the sciences. Ward sometimes even suggests that due to the similarities in the genetic methods of both psychology and biology, the former might be better simply called biology (‘Psychological Principles I’, 166–7).

continuum. There is a slow process of development from our infantile undifferentiated perceptions to those of adult life, and differentiation is always accompanied by integration, retentiveness, and assimilation. This process accounts for the development of complex presentations and thoughts and for why we *habitually* concentrate on particular aspects rather than others and connect certain ideas and movements. For Ward, this is the Kantian theory of synthesis, but a synthesis that occurs ‘within the whole’

(PP 410).

Differentiation, then, is a synthetic process that requires an active subject in both natural and social relations. However, no concrete individual’s ‘psychoplasm’ is introduced into the world in a completely homogeneous state. Character is partly determined by the structural modifications acquired through heredity, which form the basis for our original position in the world. We are not born as *tabulae rasae*. Ward uses ‘*Anlage*’, the German word for disposition, to refer to these initial structural modifications, and understands *Anlagen* in a Leibnizian sense. Leibniz argued against Locke’s ‘universal consent’ criterion for the existence of innate ideas, and claimed that while we are not immediately aware of universal innate truths, we have ‘a special affinity with them’. This is

a *disposition*, an aptitude, a *preformation*, which determines our soul and brings it about that they are derivable from it. Just as there is a difference between the shapes which are arbitrarily given to a stone or piece of marble, and those which its veins already indicate or are disposed to indicate if the sculptor avails himself of them.

(NE 77)

For reasons discussed above, Ward rejects the idea that we have a stable set of pre-existent cognitive capacities shared by all individuals, but he does believe we are born with a set of *Anlagen* acquired through evolution and heredity. These are the marble’s veins. They do not determine our actions necessarily, but facilitate certain behaviours (if the sculptor avails herself of them) while impeding others (PP 429). They are also to a certain degree plastic. The very *individuality* of our ‘self’ is the set of habits or dispositions that defines how we will react in certain situations, but these habits and dispositions evolve due to our conative activities. Importantly, new *Anlagen* are acquired through social interactions. The powers of the individual subject advance through her relations with other agents and without these social relations, intellection and self-consciousness would be impossible. For Ward, ‘intellect’ is inherited but not innate. It is an ‘organon’ that we acquire through growing up in a society in which this organon has been developed and preserved over very many generations:

If a man chooses to think he must play the game if he is ‘to score’; but the laws of the game are not of his devising. Accordingly in common parlance a man’s

character and his intelligence are always regarded as distinct and largely as independent. His character is displayed in the use he makes of this organon; he may improve it; he may neglect it, or he may abuse it: so far he has a certain responsibility... [However,] this organon... pertains to the individual's *Anlage*, not to his 'subjective being'. It is an 'endowment' for which, as such, he is neither to be praised nor blamed.

(PP 454)

The 'intellect' is not an individual faculty, but the result of many generations of intersubjective work aimed at practical ends. In this passage, he refers to our engaging with the intellectual as playing a game in order to stress the importance of activity and the behaviouristic element of the intellectual, which is also emphasized by claiming that it pertains to the individual's *Anlagen*. However, this is not a game that exists independently from its players:

The advance of every normal human being *living in society*, from the one level to the other is only a recapitulation of the advance very gradually achieved through the 'social medium' by the race as a whole. This fact was overlooked altogether by Kant and various thinkers in the eighteenth century. Yet it is entirely through the inter-subjective intercourse thereby attained that what thought-knowledge we have has arisen.

(TM 32)

There is no sharp dualism between individual and universal experience, the latter is a 'growth and development' from the former:

[I]n the conceptions of universal experience there is the same mutual implication, the same articulation, of subjective and objective factors. And since we have seen that the conceptions of universal experience depend upon the perceptions of individual experience, which they elaborate by analysis and resynthesis, we conclude that experience is throughout one organic unity.

(NA 487–8)

At this point we have travelled all the way from individual experience conceived as an organic whole to universal experience similarly conceived as an organic unity, albeit one that has evolved from the practical powers, experiences, and hard work of generations of interacting subjects. Ward, therefore, has presented a sophisticated pragmatic account of the epigenetic, social, and therefore organic generation of trans-subjectivity from the individual but necessarily intersubjective activities of conative agents. According to this account 'Universal experience' – or *Bewusstsein überhaupt* – is the supra-individual that it is irreducible to the sum of its causes yet nothing without them. It is the indispensable condition for a conative individual to go beyond its own individuality, to recognize itself as a social subject, and consequently attain objectively valid experience. It is in this sense both

immanent and *dominant*. For Ward, this organic theory eradicates the chasms between the practical and theoretical, sense and understanding, and individual and universal knowledge. He claims that

[t]he gradual advance through impulse and desire to practical reason runs throughout on all fours with the advance through sensation and imagination to theoretical reason. At every stage the two [the practical and the theoretical] form one experience, knowing registering its progress and practical enterprises promoting it.

(RE 416)

Ward's great achievement here is to retain the philosophically defensible core of Kantianism, while overcoming the dualisms which have always threatened this core through revising it according to the principles of nineteenth-century evolutionary theory. This is an achievement, I want to suggest, that is not solely of historical interest.

Although Ward began to develop his philosophy over a century ago in a very different context of biological understanding, there is an important sense in which his evolutionary Kantianism sounds remarkably contemporary and far more in tune with developments in modern biology than much of the literature presently produced under the name of 'evolutionary psychology'.¹¹ Partly this is because the debates concerning preformation and epigenesis that concerned Ward at the turn of the twentieth century are being echoed in debates concerning 'genetic determinism', and the challenge to this paradigm introduced by epigenomics or even dynamic processes of cultural evolution, which in turn have an effect on biological evolution. The 'one-dimensional' gene-centred view on which evolutionary psychology is based has faced significant challenges due to recent advances in molecular biology. Not only have non-genomic biological factors been shown to have a crucial role in inheritance and evolution, but there is now convincing evidence to show that behavioural and symbolic (or linguistic) factors play a much greater role in these processes than previously believed (Jablonka and Lamb, *Evolution in Four Dimensions*; Dupré, *Processes of Life*). Because Ward paid such close attention to the dynamic relationship between the physiological evolution of the human individual and both its organic and cultural environments, he provides a philosophy capable of addressing the ways that these distinct but interrelated structures evolve together. Perhaps the most vital conclusion he derives from his analysis is that whenever we attempt to disentangle the evolutionary processes of history, life, and mind, we are left with inadequate abstractions. These may be useful for certain scientific purposes when understood for what they are, but ultimately mislead if mistaken for realities. A proper understanding of the true nature

¹¹ See Dupré (*Human Nature, Processes of Life*, 245–60) for a convincing critique of the premises of evolutionary psychology.

and causes of human behaviour will require an understanding of how these processes interact. Crucially, if the ‘epigenetics’ revolution causes the fundamental shift in biological thinking that it promises, this is a conclusion of which contemporary philosophers of mind, evolutionary psychologists, and philosophers of biology will have to take account, and Ward’s philosophy offers a rich untapped conceptual resource for responding to this new paradigm.

1.3 Ward, James, and a Pragmatic Theory of Knowledge

With the principles of Ward’s ‘evolutionary Kantianism’ outlined, we can turn to James’s version of this theory (developed also during the 1880s in his works on Psychology), and its links to pragmatism. This step is crucial for understanding how Ward draws his own pragmatist theory of knowledge from a similar foundation and the close connection between psychology and epistemology in the works of both philosophers. I shall argue that there is a distinct appropriation and development of the Kantian doctrines of the ‘primacy of the practical’ and ‘room for faith’ that characterizes Pragmatism (or at least Jamesean pragmatism) and that an understanding of this appropriation is essential for understanding Ward’s place in this tradition.

In James’s 1882 ‘Rationality, Activity, and Faith’, quoted also in the 1890 *Principles* (WWJ XI 72; WWJ IX 941; cf. WWJ V 366), he wrote that ‘the intellect is [entirely] built up of practical interests’ and explicitly links this to the theory of evolution. That this claim forms a major part of his version of pragmatism is also clear in his *Pragmatism* lectures. For James, emphasizing at first the Kantian side of this theory, ‘common sense’ is the standard set of ‘intellectual forms or categories’ of thought shared by most members of a society which are used to *intellectualize* ‘the everlasting weather of our perceptions’ (WWJ I 123). These forms bring together the relative disorder of experience into a coherent life history. This is close to Ward’s intellectual organon discussed above. James writes that ‘[w]e plunge forward into the field of fresh experience with the beliefs our ancestors and we have made already; these determine what we notice; what we notice determines what we do; what we do again determines what we experience’ (WWJ I 122). However, for the same reasons as Ward, James stresses his distance from Kant insofar as ‘between categories fulminated before nature began, and categories gradually forming themselves in nature’s presence, the whole chasm between rationalism and empiricism yawns’ (WWJ I 119). On the one hand, as empiricists, Ward and James are both clearly on the same side of this chasm. Yet, on the other, the crucial *pragmatist* insight that both their philosophies express is that this chasm can be bridged through conceiving our intellectual forms as the product of processes of evolution dependent on intersubjective activities driven by practical needs. The development of ‘common sense’ has been engendered as a means to practical ends. For

James, what is important about the distinction between rationalism and pragmatism is that while rationalism assumes we take the world ‘as it is’, pragmatism insists that the human contribution cannot be eliminated from the development of knowledge. Both James and Ward see Darwinianism as suggesting that ‘thought’ is a survival instrument that enables self-conservation and self-betterment. It is selective insofar as it focuses on the means to these ends. A pragmatist theory of knowledge follows from this evolutionism for both philosophers because they are confident that the ‘working forms’ that act as successful instruments for action are likely to be true. Nevertheless, Ward says very little about truth in his published work. As already mentioned above, he sometimes suggests that the true is the useful, but at others he claims that which is useful is useful because it is true (PP 416). He makes his position clearer in his correspondence with James (WJC XII 372). He tells James that he sympathizes with the pragmatic definition of truth with the proviso that continual success ‘points *towards* truth’ rather than providing a criterion for ‘absolute’ truth. This is because he agrees with James that faith is ‘belief in something concerning which doubt is theoretically possible’ (WWJ VI 76). The ‘working forms theory of truth’ entails that there are no beliefs that cannot theoretically be doubted, but such a doubt-free status is what absolute truth requires. Therefore, knowledge could never be fully disentangled from faith.

The indispensability of faith in knowledge is, for Ward, the principal conclusion of James’s ‘Will to Believe’ (WWJ VI, 13–33). Ward is approving of this famous paper and has a sophisticated understanding of its main argument. According to his reading, it is not concerned with the prudential consequences of belief, but is an attempt at a ‘reconciliation’ of scientific reasoning with the religious hypothesis.¹² Ward argues that the primacy of the practical means that a primitive ‘faith’ directs all our actions. Kant’s ‘room for faith’ is the very consequence of the evolutionary understanding of the ‘primacy of the practical’. Knowledge is gained through doing, and we attempt to do that which will affect us positively. However, in most of our doings we do not wait until we gain the knowledge required to achieve our ends from elsewhere, but we experiment and have faith in our hypotheses. This is the meaning of Ward’s mantra ‘experience is a process of becoming expert by experiment’ and, like James,¹³ he echoes Kierkegaard and claims ‘[w]e trust and try first, not understanding till afterwards’ (RE 416; cf. WEP 139). For this reason, the will to believe to some degree underwrites all of our beliefs, whether ordinary, scientific, or religious. Furthermore, Ward argues, in line with James’s own view, that the doctrine of

¹²See Klein (‘Science, Religion, and the Will to Believe’) for an excellent reconciliationist reading of James’s paper. For a contrary reading see Misak (*American Pragmatists*, 60–7).

¹³James wrote that ‘[w]e live forwards, a Danish thinker has said, but we understand backwards’ (WWJ I 107).

the will to believe is the essential foundation of any successful pragmatism. He wrote to James that

at any stage in the process what is reached will be not the true but the truer. Moreover the will to believe that such progress requires is at bottom the will to realise that success confirms: this alone entitles it to be called pragmatic. It is this kind of faith that I believe in.

(WJC XII 372)

Following this, Ward proposes a pragmatic defence of theist belief, since faith in the religious hypothesis is not unique, but rather the highest form of a kind of faith that is found to be an element in all of our actions. He never suggests that his philosophy will supply us with ‘knowledge’ of the religious hypothesis. He rejects all forms of ‘intellectualism’ that attempt a priori proofs of God’s existence. Yet he does, with the proviso that it is not contradicted by science, claim that his form of pragmatic empiricism allows room for faith.

In the one book-length study of Ward’s philosophy, Murray concludes that ‘[t]here can be no doubt about it that Ward was no pragmatist’ (*Philosophy of James Ward*, 146). I have shown that there are good reasons to doubt this. Nonetheless, although Ward’s philosophy displays strong pragmatist symptoms, he should not be regarded as a simple disciple of James, or even Peirce, but rather as a ‘fellow traveller’. The close affinities between Ward’s philosophy and pragmatism are the product not only of (1) direct influence (which was reciprocal in James’s case);¹⁴ but also of (2) a convergence of interests (particularly in the impact of evolution and empirical science for philosophical method); and (3) mutual influences (Berkeley, Kant, Lotze, Renouvier, and Spinoza, among others). Consequently, when pragmatism gained notoriety towards the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, and Ward’s reviewers and commentators started to note the ‘overwhelming influence’ of this movement on his thought (see RE 481; Murray, *Philosophy of James Ward*, 134; Pringle-Pattison, *Idea of God*, 184), he was hesitant to refer to himself as a pragmatist, even though he did not consider the label ‘a term of abuse’ (RE 501). In a letter to James, Ward suggested that pragmatism is just not particularly original. Its central claims are the ‘primacy of the practical’ and the ‘room for faith’ both already found in Kant (WJC XII 267). However, as we have seen, Ward explicitly defends both of these doctrines. Since he falls into the category by his own definition, his point may be that he was a pragmatist before pragmatism was popularly labelled pragmatism and feels no excitement with regard to it as a new ‘movement’.

¹⁴Ward was also a direct influence on Dewey (see Dewey, *Psychology* 1887, 13; and *Psychology* 1891, vi).

Peirce would have agreed with Ward both that Kant was a crucial predecessor for pragmatism and concurrently that pragmatism was not a ‘new way of thinking’. He frequently enlisted Kant as a pragmatist predecessor, alongside Berkeley, Locke, and even Spinoza (see CP VIII 206; TEP II 399). In Peirce’s view, the fact that this impressive lineage may mark its lack of originality should not count against it, but rather emphasize its great importance. Kant’s significance for pragmatism has also been frequently highlighted in the secondary literature and Murphey referred to James and Peirce, as well as the other Cambridge (Massachusetts) pragmatists, as ‘Kant’s children’ (‘Kant’s Children and the Cambridge Pragmatists’). However, while James himself recognized the importance of the ‘room for faith’ for his work (WJC VIII 275), he was far less keen to refer to Kant as a philosophical father (Perry, *Thought and Character of William James*, 469–70). Although commentators have frequently stressed that James *was* far closer to Kant than he admitted (see Carlson, ‘James and the Kantian Tradition’), it is true that even if pragmatism is greatly influenced by Kant, it develops, subtracts from, and adds to his philosophy in a highly original way and the result is a ‘monstrous’ child.

Ward was right to highlight the ‘room for faith’ and the ‘primacy of practical reason’ as crucial tenets of pragmatist thought. However, what is important about the pragmatist appropriation of these doctrines, as Ward well knew, is, first, the way they were *naturalized* and developed in line with evolutionary thought, and, second, the way they were used to create an evolutionary philosophy markedly *distinct* from other contemporary evolutionists, such as Herbert Spencer. For Spencer, the mind was merely a *passive* part of nature evolving through reactionary adjustments of ‘inner to outer relations’ (WWJ V 7), but for James (and Ward) it plays an *active* synthetic role in the construction of its world and practical interests guide this activity. These very interests, James wrote, ‘are the real *a priori* elements in cognition’ (WWJ V 11n.1). Because of this development, the *primary of the practical* for James’s pragmatism, as for Ward’s, emphasizes the way that the *a priori* functions of individual minds are actively involved in the construction of the world. This distinctly pragmatist appropriation of the primacy of the practical is clearly evident in Ward’s own work since he believes that knowledge is not ready-made, but rather the *ever-evolving* product of the attempts of conative individuals to successfully interact with their environment and each other, and this attempt is directed by self-interest. This interest, the same *a priori* element argued for by James, guides selection and provides the most fundamental stimulus for the development of the organic body of knowledge. This is the ineliminable influence of the trail of the human serpent, an influence that is nonetheless constrained, but not entirely determined, by the objective world. Truth is tied up with successful action, and knowledge develops as a means to ends. Insofar as our ideas allow us to successfully achieve these ends they are useful, and insofar as they are useful we have the right to believe they

are true or at least valid.¹⁵ The acquisition of knowledge, therefore, is a dynamic evolution of the relatively stable habits which determine our interactions with the world. The second crucial Kantian doctrine – the ‘room for faith’ in its pragmatist form – follows from the first, insofar as this ‘room for faith’ is pragmatic fallibilism. We must accept that usefulness is no criterion for absolute certainty; it provides us with the right to ‘faith’ in our ideas, but this is a faith that can always be shaken. Even the most robust habits can, in principle, be broken. As we have seen above, Ward defends this second doctrine – pragmatic fallibilism – with just as much fervour as the first.

While simply defending the ‘primacy of the practical’ and the ‘room for faith’ is *not* enough to be characterized as a pragmatist, I want to suggest that defending these doctrines when developed, connected, and understood by way of evolutionary theory as both James and Ward did *is*. These pragmatic aspects of Ward’s thought, therefore, give us a strong indication of his place in the history of Cambridge pragmatism. However, in the following section, I demonstrate the full extent of Ward’s pragmatism by showing that these doctrines both inform and are expanded by his metaphysical methodology. As Brandom (*Perspectives on Pragmatism*, 7–10) has convincingly argued, one of the classical pragmatists’ principal achievements was to reconcile ‘naturalism’ and ‘empiricism’ more successfully than any of their predecessors or successors. This is because they showed not only that *experience* is a dynamic evolutionary process of habit acquisition, but so too is *nature*. Nature and experience, therefore, are two sides of the same pragmatist coin. As I shall now argue, Ward played a crucial ‘fellow traveller’ role in the development and promotion of this pragmatic *metaphysics of nature*.

2. METAPHYSICS, METHODOLOGY, AND EXPERIENCE

Towards the end of his *Pragmatism* lecture series, while reiterating the distinction between rationalism and pragmatism, William James takes a metaphysical turn. *Reality*, for the rationalist, he tells us, ‘*is ready-made and complete from all eternity*’. Yet for the pragmatist, ‘*it is still in the makings and awaits part of its complexion from the future... it is still pursuing its adventures*’ (WWJ I 123). This suggests that the evolutionism that informs James’s theory of cognition runs deep in his philosophy. However, pragmatism is often presented as an anti-metaphysical position. The contemporary pragmatist Price claims that it ‘*simply turns its back on metaphysics*’ (*Naturalism without Mirrors*, 319). It is also easy to find

¹⁵Ward suggested to James that he should ‘confine truth to ideas, say not that truth exists but that it is valid, & you have simpler problem. No sane man wishes truth to be other than it is’ (WJC XII 372; cf. RE 414–15).

anti-metaphysical sounding passages in the works of the classical pragmatists. Peirce, for example, wrote that the pragmatist doctrine shows that ‘almost every proposition of ontological metaphysics is either meaningless gibberish... or else is downright absurd’ (TEP II 338). Nevertheless, the classical pragmatists did not turn their backs on metaphysics entirely, but argued that it must be pursued by paying close attention to the developments of science and through tying its concepts to mental phenomena. Peirce rejected ‘ontological’, but not ‘scientific’ metaphysics.¹⁶ Ward conceived this to be one of the pragmatists’ principal virtues. He frequently cited Peirce’s works on metaphysics approvingly (see RE 74, 350; WEP 244)¹⁷ and engaged in debates with James over the nature of pluralist metaphysics¹⁸ both in correspondence and in person.

If Ward’s own metaphysics is of a pragmatic character, it is because he agreed that all metaphysical concepts must be comprehensible from the perspective of practical experience. We begin *in mediis rebus* without ontological deductions and dialectic (RE 437). From this empiricist starting point it follows that systematic completeness is impossible. Nevertheless, the purpose of philosophy is, he proposes, to round out the system of the world in such a manner that all domains of science and philosophy form a *coherent* whole (with science understood in a broad enough sense as to include sociology and history). The demand for finality should be replaced by the attempt to continually advance and develop theories coherently, while accepting that conclusions will always be tentative. History has taught us that we could never be immune from the possibility of an intellectual crisis (WEP 301). Further to this there is one more supreme epistemological principle for metaphysical reasoning: continuity. Again, the influence of Darwinism motivates his defence of this principle. If the mind is not ontologically separate from the natural world, but instead one of the results of evolutionary development, we should be able to treat the laws of mind as continuous with physical laws. The laws that govern human mental behaviour are, therefore, the later products of the same continuous process that was originally responsible for the formation of nature’s most fundamental laws. Consequently, Ward even suggests that without an account of psychology, metaphysics is impossible (‘Psychological Principles I’, 168). We have already seen one aspect of this continuity emphasized by his use of bioplasm and psychoplasm, but he does not regard this process of differentiation and the increase in complexity through the development of habit as limited to the biological and psychological realms alone. Ward takes Spinoza’s claim that *all things* strive to persevere in their being

¹⁶On Peirce’s metaphysics see Hookway (*Peirce*, 262–88) and Reynolds (*Peirce’s Scientific Metaphysics*).

¹⁷Especially his (1891) ‘Architecture of Theories’ (TEP I 285–97).

¹⁸On James’s metaphysics see Myers (‘Pragmatist Metaphysics’) and Sprigge (*James and Bradley*).

seriously, and suggests that as the only things we can have immediate experience of are conative agents, we should infer the existence of conative agents *all the way down*. These agents do not all share the same capabilities and only in the very highest groups is there anything like foresight, judgement, or conscious purposiveness. Most agents are impulsive rather than deliberative, even if this impulsiveness is still selective since they will always aim towards self-conservation. At a certain point the impulse towards self-conservation evolves into an impulse towards self-betterment (WSK, 118–9; cf. NA, 292–3).

As the passage from James at the start of this section makes clear, part of what is characteristic about pragmatist metaphysics is that it regards reality itself as in a process of evolution. Both James and Ward see this evolution as dependent on the inter-relations of such conative agents. As Ward writes:

[A]ll changes in the environment will be the result of conative impulses somewhere; and from such of these as succeed, the agents, if we credit them with any retentiveness, learn something. A successful adjustment concurring with the release from pain will be specially impressive. In this way the evil and the remedy will be so far associated that on each repetition of the former the many tentative movements will become less, and the one effective movement more, pronounced, till at length it becomes an immediate, habitual, and eventually even a mechanical response.

(RE 68)

James's basic position is remarkably similar. He suggests that radical empiricism

leads to the assumption of a collectivism of personal lives (which may be of any grade of complication, and superhuman or infrahuman as well as human), variously cognitive of each other, variously conative and impulsive, genuinely evolving and changing by effort and trial, and by their interaction and cumulative achievements making up the world.¹⁹

(WWJ XVII 545)

The main results of this form of pragmatic metaphysics are, first, that *all* structure at *all* levels of reality are dependent primarily on practical activities; and, second, that structures formed at higher levels of reality are dependent on and evolved from functional practical activities that characterize lower levels (TM 50). Since there is no sharp break between mind and matter, it is a 'continuous naturalism'. James elucidates this in his *Principles* when he claims that even nature's fundamental laws are nothing but habits (WWJ VIII 109). Peirce expanded on this theory by arguing that we cannot suppose that laws, which just so happen to provide perfect conditions for life, exist for no reason. As

¹⁹James stressed the closeness between certain aspects of his metaphysical views with Ward's on the final page of his posthumous *Some Problems of Philosophy* (WWJ VII 110 n.3).

habits of nature these laws must have evolved and, therefore, ‘philosophy requires a thorough-going evolutionism or none’ (TEP I 289). This theory greatly influenced Ward. However, for both Peirce and Ward, the type of evolution that drives the evolution of laws is not merely Darwinian; the Lamarckian factor is essential. Peirce states that ‘Darwinian evolution is evolution by the operation of chance, and the destruction of bad results, while Lamarckian evolution is evolution by the effect of habit and effort’ (TEP I 290). This passage emphasizes two sides of Lamarckianism: first, ‘effort’ conceived as an inherent tendency towards greater perfection; and, second, the development of ‘habits’ formed through organisms’ attempts to successfully adapt to their environment. Essential to the Lamarckian view is the claim that these habits, formed as responses to the conditions of life, can be inherited (Mayr, *Growth of Biological Thought*, 353–7). Lamarckianism fits well into pragmatic metaphysics since it insists on a principal place for the activities and needs of individuals for adaptational variation. Ward’s metaphysical methodology insisted above all on coherence and continuity and this is exactly what such a model of evolution provides. Just as the intellectual forms which structure our experience develop through processes of use and disuse according to the conative actives discussed in §1 Knowledge, so do physiological structures. The move that both Peirce and Ward made, following the French spiritualist Émile Boutroux (*De la contingence des lois de la nature*), is to extend this continuity between mind and organic world to cosmology (a move which the idealist Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison referred to as ‘ultra-pragmatism’ (*Idea of God*, 184)). The great benefit of conceiving nature’s laws as habits is that it overcomes the crucial antinomy between mechanism and life, science and history, and puts conation at the foundation of both psychical *and* physical life. That which today appears as a system of stable laws is really the result of trial and error; laws are well-formed habits of nature.

Until recently the ill repute of Lamarckianism in biology made this form of pragmatic metaphysics difficult to take seriously. However, some biologists and philosophers of biology have begun to insist that a form of neo-Lamarckianism is essential for Darwinian evolution. In an important passage, Jablonka and Lamb maintain that

[i]nformation is transferred from one generation to the next by many interacting inheritance systems. Moreover, contrary to current dogma, the variation on which natural selection acts is not always random in origin or blind to function: new heritable variation can arise in response to conditions of life. Variation is often targeted, in the sense that it preferentially affects functions or activities that can make organisms better adapted to the environment in which they live. Variation is also constructed, in the sense that, whatever their origin, which variants are inherited and what final form they assume depend on various ‘filtering’ and ‘editing’ processes that occur before and during transmission.

(*Evolution in Four Dimensions*, 319)

If this is right, we have both the ‘effort’, redefined in a more moderate way as ‘targeted variation’, and the development of ‘habits’ in response to *practical* conditions of life, that Peirce and Ward insist on for their pragmatic metaphysics.

The theory outlined by Jablonka and Lamb is controversial, but regardless of neo-Lamarckianism’s final status, there is much to praise in pragmatic metaphysics. The combination of (1) a broad practical empiricism; (2) the close attention paid to scientific developments; and (3) the commitment to coherentism, together makes an attractive package. The considerable advances in the sciences over the last 100 years of course prevent us from expecting to find in the works of James, Peirce, or Ward a fully formed metaphysics worthy of adoption in all its features, but there is, nevertheless, much of great interest in each of their systems which could serve as inspiration for and maybe even breath new life into contemporary metaphysics.²⁰ From a brand of metaphysics that has fallibilism and the rejection of dogmatic finality at its core, we should expect nothing more.

3. CONCLUSION

It is not easy to provide a neat set of necessary and sufficient conditions that must be fulfilled in order to be classified as a pragmatist. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that pragmatism has greatly evolved since its original development on American soil. Although from the contemporary neo-pragmatist perspective we may be tempted to consider pragmatism as concerned solely with truth, rationality, and value, the classical pragmatists were concerned with far more and the effects of the pragmatic method extended to their scientific metaphysical speculations. Examining Ward’s relationship to classical pragmatism shows that these broader aspects were crucial to its early reception, and his position in pragmatism’s history cannot be fully understood without taking this into account. As I have shown, an examination of his relationship with pragmatism provides us with a richer understanding of the early reception of pragmatism in Cambridge, and helps us to start to better grasp the wide range of allusions to and discussions of pragmatism during this period and the numerous lines of influence it spawned. Concurrently, it makes clear that Ward’s philosophy was not mere reactionary anti-naturalistic theism and illuminates a much richer *revolutionary* side of his work. Once this side is brought to light we can begin to assess the true value of his work, which, I propose, is not merely of historical interest, and his important place in the history of early analytic philosophy.

Submitted 17 February 2014; revised 23 May; accepted 23 May
University of Edinburgh

²⁰The main purpose of this section has been to show that on the basis of the principles elaborated in §1 Ward developed a distinctly pragmatic metaphysics. A full defence of such metaphysics is beyond the scope of this article, but I hope to present such a defence, particularly of Ward’s metaphysics, elsewhere.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations

Works of James Ward

- NA: Ward, J. *Naturalism and Agnosticism: Fourth Edition*. London: A & C Black, [1899] 1915.
- PP: Ward, J. *Psychological Principles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918.
- RE: Ward, J. *The Realm of Ends: Third Edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911 [1920].
- TM: Ward, J. 'A Theistic Monadism'. In *Contemporary British Philosophy: Personal Statements*, Second Series, edited by J. H. Muirhead, 25–54. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1925.
- WEP: Ward, J. *Essays in Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927.
- WSK: Ward, J. *A Study of Kant*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922.

Other abbreviations

- AHE: Kant, I. *Anthropology, History, and Education*. Edited by R. B. Louden and G. Zöllner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- C: *The Century Dictionary*. 10 vols. Edited by W. D. Whitney. New York: The Century, 1895.
- CP: Peirce, C. S. *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. 8 vols. Edited by C. Hartshorne, P. Weiss, and A. Burks. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931–58.
- CPR: Kant, I. *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by N. Kemp Smith. London: Macmillan, 1933. Cited by A/B editions, 1781/1787.
- E: Spinoza, B. *Ethics*. Translated by E. Curley. London: Penguin, 1996.
- NE: Leibniz, G. W. *New Essays on Human Understanding*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996.
- TEP: Peirce, C. S. *The Essential Peirce*. 2 vols. Volume 1 edited by N. Houser and C. Kloesel, volume 2 edited by the Peirce Edition Project. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992 and 1998.
- WJC: James, W. *The Correspondence of William James*. 12 vols. Edited by I. K. Skrupskelis and E. M. Berkeley with the assistance of B. Grohskopf and W. Bradbeer. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1992–2004.
- WWJ: James, W. *The Works of William James*. 19 vols. Edited by F. Bowers and I. K. Skrupskelis. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975–88.

Other texts cited

'Architecture of Theories'. TEP I, 285–297, 1891.

- Basile, P. 'James Ward'. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy [online], 2009. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/james-ward/>
- Boucher, D., and A. Vincent. *British Idealism: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: Continuum, 2012.
- Boutroux, E. *De la contingence des lois de la nature*. Deuxième éd. Paris: Félix Alcan, [1874] 1895.
- Brandom, R. *Perspectives on Pragmatism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011.
- Brett, G. S. *A History of Psychology: Volume III Modern Psychology*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1921.
- Candlish, S. *The Russell/Bradley Dispute and its Significance for Twentieth-Century Philosophy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Carlson, T. 'James and the Kantian Tradition'. In *The Cambridge Companion to William James*, edited by R. A. Putnam, 363–84. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Coleman, W. *Biology in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Cunningham, G. W. *The Idealistic Argument in Recent British and American Philosophy*. New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1933.
- Dawes Hicks, G. 'Prof. Ward's Psychological Principles'. *Mind* 30, no. 117 (1921): 1–24.
- Dawes Hicks, D. 'The Philosophy of James Ward'. *Mind* 34, no. 135 (1925): 280–99.
- Dewey, J. *Psychology*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887.
- Dewey, J. *Psychology*. Third Revised ed. New York: American Book Company, 1891.
- Dunham, J., Grant, I. H., and Watson, S. *Idealism: The History of a Philosophy*. Durham: Acumen, 2011.
- Dupré, J. *Human Nature and the Limits of Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Dupré, J. *Processes of Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Goodman, R. *Wittgenstein and William James*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Gould, S. J. *Ontogeny and Phylogeny*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977.
- Hookway, C. *Peirce*. London: Routledge, 1985.
- Hylton, P. *Russell, Idealism, and the Emergence of Analytic Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Jablonka, E., and Lamb, M. J. *Evolution in Four Dimensions*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005.
- Klein, A. "Science, Religion, and the Will to Believe." *HOPOS*, forthcoming.
- Kuklick, B. *The Rise of American Philosophy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Lamprecht, S. P. 'James Ward's Critique of Naturalism'. *The Monist* 36, no. 1 (1926): 136–52.
- Mace, C. A. 'Ward, James'. In *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. VIII, edited by P. Edwards, 277–8. New York: Macmillan, 1967.

- Mander, W. J. *British Idealism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Mayr, E. *The Growth of Biological Thought: Diversity, Evolution, and Inheritance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Misak, C. *The American Pragmatists*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Misak, C. *Cambridge Pragmatism*, forthcoming.
- Moore, G. E. 'The Refutation of Idealism'. *Mind* 12, no. 48 (1903): 433–53.
- Murphey, M. 'Kant's Children and the Cambridge Pragmatists'. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 4, no. 1 (1968): 3–33.
- Murray, A. H. *The Philosophy of James Ward*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937.
- Myers, W. T. 'Pragmatist Metaphysics: A Defense'. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 40, no. 1 (2004): 39–52.
- Neary, F. 'James Ward'. In *Biographical Encyclopedia of British Idealism*, edited by W. Sweet, 684–8. London: Continuum, 2010.
- Passmore, J. *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*. London: Penguin, 1957.
- Perry, R. 'Recent Philosophical Procedure with Reference to Science'. *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 1, no. 7 (1904): 169–74.
- Perry, R. *The Thought and Character of William James: Volume II Philosophy and Psychology*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1935.
- Price, H. *Naturalism without Mirrors*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Pringle-Pattison, A. S. *The Idea of God*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917.
- Reynolds, A. *Peirce's Scientific Metaphysics*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002.
- Rorty, R. *Consequences of Pragmatism*. Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1982.
- Seigfried, C. H. 'Pragmatist Metaphysics? Why Terminology Matters'. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 37, no. 1 (2001): 13–21.
- Sprigge, T. *James and Bradley: American Truth and British Reality*. Chicago, TN: Open Court, 1994.
- Taylor, A. E. 'Critical Notice of *Naturalism and Agnosticism*'. *Mind* 9, no. 34 (1900): 245–58.
- Wall, B. E. 'John Venn, James Ward, and the Chair of Mental Philosophy and Logic at the University of Cambridge'. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 68, no. 1 (2007): 131–55.
- Ward, J. 'Animal Locomotion'. *Nature* IX (March 1874): 381–2.
- Ward, J. 'Some Notes on the Physiology of the Nervous System of the Freshwater Crayfish (*Astacus fluviatilis*)'. *Journal of Physiology* II (1879): 214–27.
- Ward, J. 'A General Analysis of Mind'. *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 16, no. 4 (1882): 366–85.
- Ward, J. 'Psychological Principles I: The Standpoint of Psychology'. *Mind* 8, no. 30 (1883a): 153–69.
- Ward, J. 'Psychological Principles II: Fundamental Facts and Conceptions'. *Mind* 8, no. 32 (1883b): 465–86.

Ward, J. 'Psychology'. In *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 9th ed., Vol. 20, edited by T. S. Baynes, 37–85. Edinburgh: Black, 1886.

Ward, J. 'Psychological Principles III: Attention and the Field of Consciousness'. *Mind* 12, no. 45 (1887): 45–67.