BOOK REVIEWS


This is Volume 17 of the new Harvard University Press edition of the works of William James. There are 113 book reviews, 44 letters to the Editor, and 25 short essays. Around 20 of these items are easily available elsewhere (in Memories and Studies or Collected Essays and Reviews); 23 have never appeared in the bibliographies on James.

Scholars should see especially the reviews by James of Benjamin Blood, Andrew Seth (#129, for his early milieu), Schiller (#182), Personal Idealism, and #106 for James on the physiology of the brain and its relation to philosophy. In the recently discovered early review of Huxley (#70) his concerns for both the analytic and the synthetic approaches, his interest in the relationship between science and faith, and his knowledge of Kepler, Newton, and Leibniz are evident. His emphasis on the concrete shows up in his discussions of aesthetics (#167, 177) and of Wundt and Hitzig (#4). He grants (#26) that scientists may produce broad theories of the world but, he insists, they should clearly designate them as products of "the mood of faith." We find him questioning the value of "essences and forces" as explanations for phenomena (#125). In item #174 we find James approving a position in religion between agnosticism and dogmatism. Interestingly, he directs attention to Lipp's criticism of his own theory of the emotions (#169). Don't forget to read the notice on psychology at Harvard (#11).

Among newly found items are reviews of A.R. Wallace and T.H. Huxley, his two earliest published pieces (1865), indicating his views on Darwin when a medical student. Also among new items are two reviews of Annie Payson Call's books on relaxation, reviews of Carpenter's Principles of Mental Physiology (which he often cites), Marshall's Aesthetic Principles, and Nevius' book on demon possession (#166). There are newly found letters, one with comments on W.E.B. DuBois and B.T. Washington, one on demon possession, and one urging a mental examination of a murderer ready to be executed. (There are other new items in Essays on Psychical Research in this series. For James on psychical research the student should also consult items on demonic possession and #37 and #160 in this volume.)

There are around 33 reviews of books or articles on psychology plus 25 on abnormal/pathological states, 21 on philosophy, 16 on animal physiology or evolution, 7 on aesthetics (including # 130), 5 on the occult, 2 on anthropology, 2 on women's rights, and 2 on novels. There are reviews of Bain, Clifford, Freud, Jevons, Ladd (whose text Royce and James assigned), Lewes, Lipps, Reman, Renouvier, Royce, Santayana, Schiller, and Spencer. Of special interest are the reviews of John Stuart Mills' The Sub-
lection of Women and Horace Bushnell’s Women’s Suffrage.

Those interested in the political views of James should read the items on the Venezuelan crisis, the Philippines, and lynching (#'s 21, 48, 57-59). In this regard, don’t overlook #21. While his ideas on the regulation of medical practice seem libertarian (#'s 16, 46), his stance on animals experimentation (#3) is moderate.

Any academic will enjoy the items on faculty meetings, academic regalia, and student disorders in the Harvard College Yard. There are personal reminiscences of Agassiz, Royce, Chauncey Wright, Wundt and others. There is even a note to readers of Forest and Stream for help in obtaining observations on puppies.

The rhetoric of the letters varies from witty (#’s 41, 43) to the powerful “The Philippines Again” (#52), a good brief public challenge to certain aspects of US foreign policy, wonderfully relevant today. For historians of education there is material on the growth of Harvard, student discipline, the elective system, faculty debates and the honors system.

The introduction, Apparatus and Appendices are an impressive account of emendations, provenance and editorial methods. The Notes are very helpful.

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In terms of scholarship, substance and style, this book is a masterpiece in the original sense of this term. It is indispensable for comprehending Dewey’s project in the manner he himself conceived this project. In particular, “John Dewey’s Conception of Philosophy” (the subtitle of The Necessity of Pragmatism) is, in Prof. Sleeper’s hands, saved from Richard Rorty’s “insouciant reductionism” (p. 1) and, what is more important, from a familiar but misleading story about the genesis and development of pragmatism.

Unlike most other accounts of Dewey’s philosophy, this one exhibits the centrality of logic in Dewey’s approach. To be sure, the understanding of logic is reconstructed and, as a crucial aspect of this conceptual reconstruction, the concept of necessity is reconceived. In this reconstruction, our logical norms are seen to be emerge from actual processes of inquiry and to reflect the ontological structures encountered in those processes (p. 47); in this reconceptualization, “[n]ecessity means needed; contingency no longer required—because already enjoyed” (EW 4:29, quoted on p. 39). (Put another way, “Dewey would have us start with de facto examples in which cognitive structures emerge from action, as needed” [p. 59]). Moreover, “an adequate