thought as an unbroken but constantly changing stream, which added the phrase “stream of consciousness” to the English language. Following in the footsteps of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, James argues that the exact same sensation or idea can never occur twice, and that all experiences are molded by the ones that precede them. He also emphasized the continuous quality of consciousness, even when interrupted by such phenomena as seizures or sleep. In contrast, scientific attempts to “break up” or “freeze” consciousness in order to study its disparate elements, such as those of Wundt or Edward Titchener (1867-1927), seemed misguided to James. Also treated prominently in Principles of Psychology is the importance and power of habits, as a force either to resist or cultivate, depending on the circumstances.

An especially influential part of James’s book is the chapter on emotion, which expresses a principle that became known as the James-Lange Theory because the Danish physiologist Carl Lange published similar views at about the same time as James. The theory states that physical responses to stimuli precede emotional ones. In other words, James posited that emotions actually result from rather than cause physical changes. Based on this conclusion, James argued that a person’s emotional state could be improved by changing his or her physical activities or attitudes.

Related to this observation about emotion were James’s theories of the human will, which were also central to Principles of Psychology and contained the germ of his later philosophy of pragmatism. His emphasis on the will had its roots in his personal life: while in his twenties, an essay on free will by the French philosopher Charles-Bernard Renouvier (1815-1903) had inspired him to overcome his emotional problems. James rejected the idea of human beings responding passively to outside influences without power over their circumstances. Having himself triumphed by a strenuous exertion of the will, he recommended this course for others as well, defining an act of will as one characterized by focusing one’s attention strongly on the object to be attained.

James served as president of the American Psychological Association in 1894 and 1904. He applied some of his psychological theories to his other studies, including education and religion. In 1909, the year before his death, James traveled to Clark University to meet Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, during the latter’s only visit to the United States. In addition to Principles of Psychology and his other books, James had a great impact on psychology in America through his teaching. The work of his student G. Stanley Hall (1844-1924) provided a link between James’s psychological theories and the functionalist school of psychology that flourished during the 1920s.

Toward the end of his career, James concentrated his work in the area of philosophy and maintained few ties to the field of psychology.

Further Reading

Pierre Marie Félix Janet
1859-1947
French psychologist particularly well-known for his work on psychopathology and psychotherapy.

Born in Paris on May 28, 1859, Pierre Janet spent his childhood and youth in that city. His bent for natural sciences led him to pursue studies in physiology at the Sorbonne at the same time that he was studying philosophy, for which he received a master’s degree in 1882. Janet then left Paris for Le Havre and for seven years taught philosophy there in the lycée.

Janet, however, wanted to study medicine and at the hospital of Le Havre began to do research in hypnosis, using the well-known medium Léonie. Through these studies, the first of this sort, Janet came into contact with Jean Martin Charcot, but after reading Charcot and Hippolyte Bernheim he thought these investigators did not sufficiently take into consideration the psychological factors involved in neurotic phenomena. This forced Janet to undertake a deep psychological study of the neuroses, in particular of hysterical neurosis.

In his doctoral thesis in 1889 entitled “L’Automatisme psychologique” (Psychological Automatism), Janet devised an inventory of the manifestations of automatic activities, thinking that it would help him in studying the “elementary forms of sensibility and conscience.” At the age of 30 he returned to Paris, and Charcot appointed him director of the laboratory of pathological psychology at the Salpêtrière hospital. Janet completed his medical studies, and in 1893 he published his medical dissertation entitled “The Mental State of Hysteric.”

Janet was by temperament a naturalist, and during all his life he improved his herbarium. He had the same acquisitive attitude toward mental patients, from whom he collected thousands of precise and detailed observations.
However, in his books he attempted to give a more theoretical and depth interpretation of a few particular cases. From 1902 until 1934 he taught at the Collège de France.

Janet’s works are numerous, and many of his writings have been translated into English. Among his books one can cite Névroses et idées fixes (1902); Les Obsessions et la psychasténie (1903); The Major Symptoms of Hysteria (1907, symposium undertaken in the United States); Les Médications psychologiques (1919); De l’angoisse à l’extase (1926); Les Débuts de l’intelligence (1935); and L’Intelligence avant le langage (1936).

Janet characterized his dynamic psychology as being a psychology of conduct, accepting the schema of a psychology of behavior while integrating in his schema conscious processes acting as regulators of action. Janet’s work has often been compared to the work of Freud, and his influence has been great in both North and South America.

Well after Janet had retired, he continued to teach and to give conferences, manifesting a great vitality until the time of his death on Feb. 23, 1947.

Further Reading

Jealousy
An envious emotional attitude primarily directed by an individual toward someone perceived as a rival for the affections of a loved one or for something one desires, such as a job, promotion, or award.

Jealousy is a combination of emotional reactions, including fear, anger, and anxiety. Studies have shown that men and women tend to feel jealous for different reasons; for instance, physical attractiveness in a perceived rival is more likely to incite jealousy in a woman than in a man. Everyone occasionally experiences normal jealousy; caring about anyone or anything means that one will become uncomfortable and anxious at the prospect of losing the desired person or object to another. An unhealthy degree of apathy would be required for an individual never to experience jealousy.

The opposite extreme is pathological jealousy, also called morbid jealousy, which differs significantly from normal jealousy in its degree of intensity. Stronger and more long-lasting than normal jealousy, it is generally characterized by serious feelings of insecurity and inadequacy, as well as suspiciousness or paranoia. Whereas healthy individuals recover from jealousy fairly rapidly, either by realizing that it is unfounded or through some other coping mechanism, pathologically jealous people become obsessed by their fears and constantly look for signs that their suspicions are true, to the point where they may find it difficult to function normally. Excessive jealousy is unhealthy and destructive in all relationships. By making people behave in ways that will alienate others, jealousy becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, depriving its victims of the affection or success they are so anxious to protect. Individuals suffering from morbid jealousy are prone to severe anxiety, depression, difficulty in controlling anger, and may engage in self-destructive behavior or elicit suicidal tendencies.

Further Reading

Arthur R. Jensen
1923-
American educational psychologist whose work has concentrated in the study of human intelligence.

Wolman, Benjamin B., ed. Historical roots of contemporary psychology. 1968.