IV.—PROF. JAMES' THEORY OF EMOTION.

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SINCE Prof. James does not at the outset definitely commit himself to a theory of emotion in general, it will be more convenient perhaps if the criticism follow the order of exposition. In the coarser emotions, it is maintained, 'the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact and our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion'. 'We feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble.' 'Each emotion is the resultant of a sum of elements, and each element is caused by a physiological process of a sort already well known.' In emotional expression 'the movements are discharged fatally by the *vis a tergo* which the stimulus exerts on a nervous system framed to respond in just that way. The objects of our rage, love and terror have this peculiar sort of impulsive power. The impulsive quality of mental states is an attribute behind which we cannot go. . . . That with one creature and object it should be of one sort, with others of another sort, is a problem for evolutionary history to explain' (ii. 550-1). It must be noted that 'Feeling' here is synonymous with consciousness in general, and is a term used 'to cover sensation and thought indifferently' (i. 185). In this connexion such a use of the word is excessively misleading, and we shall habitually use the equivalent and less ambiguous phrase, consciousness of bodily change. It will be noticed further that this theory consists of two contentions, which, as they stand, have no logical connexion with one another. One could admit that the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and yet deny that the emotion is simply the consciousness of these changes. It may be true that I am afraid because I tremble, and yet by no means the case that the fear is simply consciousness of the trembling. It does not follow then that what supports one position *de facto* supports the other, or that cases which prove but one prove the theory as a whole. From the real or alleged fact that the bodily changes come first, you cannot infer without any more ado that the emotion is simply the consciousness of the changes. On the contrary, we must insist that cases, which support but one contention at a time, are cases on which the theory as a whole cannot rest. We shall find that there is not a single case which

gives evidence in favour of the entire position maintained. The illegitimacy of the passage from the first part of the theory to the second is obscured by the fact that bodily changes if unusual and unaccountable almost inevitably cause psychical disturbance. As it is the exciting cause, however, the consciousness of the bodily disturbance cannot be the emotion. The plausibility of Prof. James' theory vanishes at once when it is pointed out, that, though consciousness of bodily disturbance almost always involves emotion, in and for itself this consciousness is not emotional at all. The confusion here indicated runs through the whole argument. On it depends all the concrete proof of the contention that emotion is simply the consciousness of bodily change, and any plausibility which the statement in itself possesses comes from the same source.

If we turn to the detailed proof, we find three different sets of cases which are adduced as evidence in favour of the view, that particular perceptions by a reflex mechanism immediately excite a series of bodily changes. In the first group there is only one instance (that of fainting at the sight of blood), in which the presumption of immediate physical influence can stand examination. It must be noted, however, that there was admittedly no emotion appropriate to the occasion. The case is thus a damaging one to the theory as a whole, for it raises the very difficult question, why consciousness of organic disturbance can at times remain merely such consciousness and at times appear in the form of emotion. In the start produced by an unusually loud sound, such as the firing of a cannon, physical influence is much too immediate for perception to have much to do with the bodily effects. The emotion in such circumstances is due to the fact that sudden organic disturbance, here as elsewhere, acts as exciting cause. In the remaining instances there is nothing to exclude the supposition that the physical changes arose from psychical disturbance caused by the perception of the object. 'We see an object moving in the woods, and we catch our breath instantly before any articulate idea of danger can arise.' This may be true, while it by no means follows that the physical effects succeeded the perception without any psychical intervention. An undefined fear may have intervened, for it is not necessary for one to fear something definite in order to be afraid. This is quite in accordance with Prof. James' own position as to the great part played in psychical life by the obscure. It is rather odd that here nothing should be taken into account but the definite, the distinct, the articulate. Further, the priority of the bodily

change cannot be proved directly, and all the presumption surely is in favour of the mental process. When we are surprised by the cutaneous shiver in listening to music and the drama, we shall doubtless find that we are at the same time in an emotionally excited condition. Here, again, when we suddenly become conscious of emotional excitement and organic perturbation at the same instant, we cannot simply assert the priority of the latter. Use is made of instances in which, it is said, emotion and knowledge are at variance. We fear though we 'positively know' there is no danger. Knowledge and emotion, however, never disagree at the moment. When one is afraid, the knowledge of safety is evidently much in the background, and, if it had not slipped out of consciousness for the moment, the fear could not have arisen. The next group of cases shows a decided change of position of which the author seems unaware. 'One who has already fainted at the sight of blood watches the preparations for a surgical operation with uncontrollable heart-sinking and anxiety. He anticipates certain feelings and the anticipation precipitates their arrival.' In the first place, whatever the uncontrollable anxiety may be, it is confessedly a psychical intervention between the particular perception and the physical effects. It is no longer maintained that the appropriate perception immediately and with fatal precision produces the bodily effects, and in all these cases the theory admittedly breaks down. In the second place, though the anticipation of the bodily changes may as exciting cause involve emotion, in and for itself this mere knowledge that certain changes will come is not such a psychical disturbance as uncontrollable anxiety. A similar criticism holds good for all those cases, in which 'the emotion which seems to precede the bodily symptoms' is asserted to be nothing but an anticipation of the symptoms themselves. In the third series of cases the change of position is even more remarkable. All that is maintained is, that here the immediate cause of emotion is a physical effect on the nerves. 'That the bodily changes take the lead and the emotion follows' can on occasion be admitted quite cheerfully on the ordinary theory; but such a state of matters is always awkward when it is asserted, that emotion is simply the consciousness of bodily change. Where there is no outward cause, the fact that the bodily changes come first is only possible, if there are other than bodily elements in emotion. If, for instance, in the case of terror cited (459) the emotion has a purely bodily cause (inability to breathe, fluttering of the heart, visceral change generally), and is itself nothing

but the consciousness of the physical disturbance, then the same conscious fact is at once the exciting object and the emotion itself. The way in which these so-called objectless emotional states are introduced obscures the fact, that the consciousness of bodily change, which is maintained to be the emotion, is at the same time the exciting object. An utterly objectless emotion is an impossibility in the nature of things; if there is no objective reference of some sort there is no emotion. The emotions of the insane are certainly not objectless, though the objects may be illusions. The fanciful explanation of those cases being thus based on a false assumption need not be further criticised. In morbid terror the bodily changes are feared on account of their unknown or indefinite evil consequences. This need not be a conscious process all through. Any unaccountable bodily disturbance naturally enough arouses instinctively a feeling of vague anxiety. In the extraordinary instances described on page 460 many mental and physical causes, both direct and indirect, are in all probability at work. One can imagine that, where long suffering has destroyed the balance of the mind, the dread naturally aroused by sudden and violent bodily changes should be much intensified. This instinctive feeling is not a fear of anything definite in the way of evil result. Hence the patient may say, and think, that the fear was objectless, though doubtless the very indefiniteness intensified the psychical disturbance. The imagination itself, that the fear is objectless may, by unduly accentuating the abnormal nature of the whole process, still further increase the terror. Such cases are too complex to be dismissed with the simple statement that the whole psychical disturbance is simply the consciousness of the bodily changes which caused it.¹ In so-called pathological rage the utterly blind and frantic nature of the movements renders it probable, that they are due to attempts to relieve some pain, inwardly caused and so intense as to overmaster all other consciousness for the time being. Rage is not thus so indifferent with regard to the particular object, or set of objects, against which its fury is directed. If, on the other hand, movement as such, action of any sort as a relief from pain, is the sole end, such indifference is perfectly natural. The violence of the actions would of itself cause the purely

¹ The description of these cases seems a little too antithetical to be strictly accurate. One can scarcely imagine an individual in a state of intense fear, with a mind perfectly clear, fearing nothing, and calmly wondering all the while what in the world he is afraid of.

bodily changes, such as swollen face and veins. On the whole, then, we cannot conclude that the first part of the theory is strongly supported, and, when we think of the cases which might be cited to prove that particular perceptions do not have immediate bodily effects, this meagre array of questionable evidence seems still more insignificant.

'The vital argument of the whole theory' is limited in two ways. It confessedly applies only to strong emotions, not to emotion in general, and at best it could only prove the second contention, that emotion is the feeling of bodily change. The argument rests essentially on the impossibility of conceiving what is left, when the bodily elements are abstracted from the concrete emotion. But, if you take away an element from any concrete state, it may be totally impossible to conceive the remaining element in isolation. This happens when the elements really only exist in union with one another, or when they are always conjoined in experience either in the way of mere concomitance or of cause and effect. Take away the kingdom from the king and the king as such has vanished. We do not conclude, however, on that account that the kingdom is the king. Nothing can be inferred, therefore, from the mere impossibility of abstracting the bodily element, and having something left which is conceivable or real. In three distinct cases this impossibility is present, though there is no doubt that there is more in the concrete state than the element abstracted. The vital argument, moreover, has been put by Prof. James in a way which renders refutation almost superfluous. It is simply as follows: Emotion dissociated from all bodily feeling is inconceivable, *therefore* emotion is simply bodily feeling; a purely disembodied human emotion cannot exist, *therefore* emotion is purely bodily. It is as if one should say: 'A purely shapeless apple cannot exist, therefore an apple is pure shape and nothing else'. This argument is closely connected with the assertion that it is impossible to detect the spiritual element even if it exists. Any total impression made on the mind, it is said, must be unanalysable whose elements are never experienced apart. That this does not apply in the present instance is easily proved. A disembodied human emotion is indeed an impossibility, since man is not a disembodied spirit, but though emotion is always associated with bodily changes, the latter is not always accompanied by emotion. In such circumstances it requires no great skill to detect on occasion the presence of an additional element. Further, though emotion must always

be accompanied by bodily change of some sort, the bodily changes may vary while it remains the same. There is no such thing as a perfectly definite set of organic changes constituting the expression of any particular emotion, and the 'perpetual variation' of the bodily elements, while the character of the emotion remains unchanged, renders discrimination of the spiritual element not only possible but unavoidable.

On the other hand, it is not difficult to show that something more than the bodily changes must be admitted, in order to make a tenable theory possible. Emotions, we are told, vary indefinitely both as to their constitution and the objects that call them forth. The constitution is the particular series of physical changes in each case. To say then that emotions vary in constitution means, that, while the bodily changes differ, the emotion remains the same. But, if consciousness of these changes alone is the emotion, where they differ the emotion differs also. That in a particular emotion the reflexes vary indefinitely with individuals and circumstances means really that we have an indefinite number of distinct emotions, and the obvious conclusion is, that in such circumstances emotions cannot be named at all. Any reflex is possible, and the elements actually vary indefinitely. There is therefore nothing on which a concept could be based. The very statement that emotions vary in constitution implies that there is some permanent element over and above the shifting physical changes. The fact thus stated by Prof. James, namely, that in any particular emotional state the bodily changes vary, cannot be expressed in terms of a theory on which the consciousness of these changes is the emotion. The proposition, that emotions of different individuals vary in constitution and exciting object, involves a distinction which this theory again cannot express. The constitution being the set of physical effects caused by the object, to maintain that this varies with individuals is to say that in different individuals the same object causes different reflexes. On the other hand, variation in the object means that the same object may cause different emotions, and, since different emotions are different series of reflexes, to assert that the object varies with individuals is simply to say again that in different individuals the same object may cause different reflexes. Only if a particular perception has a definite series of effects, can Prof. James' theory exist at all. Only if the changes do not vary in a particular emotional state, can it be even possible to assert that emotion is simply the consciousness of these. Only if the object's effects do not

vary, can evolution explain why with one perception the impulsive power should be of one sort rather than another, for only then is it of one sort rather than another. Such a position evidently cannot be maintained. There is no perception which 'goes off' in the same way always. A variation must be ascribed to the reflex effects of the perception, but the first result of this attempt, to make the first part of the theory square with the facts, is to cut away the only ground on which the second can find any footing. All through, in this connexion, Prof. James seems curiously unconscious of the scope of his admissions and statements. He depreciates the labours of those who 'reverently catalogue' the characteristic expressions of the several emotions. Instead of this, we are told, the causal questions now arise: 'Just what changes does this object, and what changes does that object excite?' and: 'How come they to excite these particular changes and no other?' If we remember that the changes any one object excites vary indefinitely, the second inquiry can only be interpreted: 'How come they to excite these particular changes and no other at this or that particular time?' If we keep in mind how far this would take us, before we had exhausted a single object, there is no doubt that, in applying it to emotion in general, we move to a deeper order of inquiry—deeper in the sense in which the bottomless pit is deeper than an ordinary bog. Though the cause is different, the causal form of inquiry is as open to the opponents of this theory as to Prof. James himself, and only when it is maintained that the essential element is the spiritual can the cataloguing of the varying emotional expressions be matter of indifference. If the expressions are everything, the conscious difference between emotions can only be accounted for by 'reverently cataloguing' in each case the particular bodily effects.

The facts which lead to the disastrous admissions just noted are easily explicable, if we understand by the spiritual element a feeling of subject towards object, and recognise that the object is to a great extent made appropriate by the way in which the subject feels related towards it. Cause is a wider term than exciting object. Generally the cause is a combination in varying proportions of subjective and objective elements. The subjective element is the cause of the indeterminateness in the rise of emotions, and explains why an object can arouse varying emotions, and sometimes be not emotional at all. At times the 'fringe' is different, and the object is thus for emotional purposes altogether created

or made anew. At times the variation is due to the varying ways, in which different subjects may feel towards objects practically the same. That most men in certain circumstances feel towards the same objects in exactly the same way is explained, partly by means of the objective element, partly by means of the fundamental unity of human nature and interests. Whatever the objective element may be, it can never by itself be the cause of any emotion. We are now in a position to lay bare the confusion, on which the view under discussion for the most part depends. Objects of terror, it is argued, make us tremble; if a ludicrous object is seen one must laugh or smile; objects of hate immediately and inevitably cause clenching of the fists and grinding of the teeth. Hence, it is concluded, the object acts directly on the body, and, as there can only be in consciousness the sensation of the bodily changes, there can be no spiritual element. In the main the facts are undeniably true. If I saw an object of terror I should inevitably start, tremble, or run away. *But if I were not afraid the object would not be an object of terror.* In other words, it is not the mere object which determines the physical effects, but the subjective feeling towards the object. This is what ultimately makes the object an object of terror, makes us start or tremble, is the spiritual element. It makes no difference that the fear may be instinctive. However instinctive the emotion may be, it is the feeling that is in the first place instinctive. Objects cannot be classed as objects of terror, &c., as they can be brought under the ordinary concepts. An emotional class is not something objective; each subject to a great extent classifies in this regard for itself, and even here time and circumstance make alteration and render stability impossible. There are, besides, very few objects which may not become so 'fringed' as to become emotionally exciting. There is thus no special class of perceptions with that impulsive power peculiar to emotion in general, and no particular perceptions with the impulsive power peculiar to particular emotions. When such statements are made, the spiritual element is not denied, but sunk in the object. The illegitimacy of the procedure is not less obvious than the difficulties it involves.

Other considerations are not wanting to show how impossible it is, to base a theory on the bodily changes alone. It is asserted that without these there would be no emotional warmth; the perception of the object would be purely cognitive. On the contrary, with the bodily changes alone this warmth can in no wise be ac-

counted for. The old confusion between consciousness of bodily disturbance involving and being emotion is rife here, and the use of the ordinary emotional terms obscures the real view maintained. The statement, that I hate such and such an individual, does not at all imply that I have any bad feelings towards him. It simply means that the perception of this individual immediately affects the action of my viscera, and, by a pre-organised mechanism, makes me show my teeth. There is no emotion in the ordinary vulgar sense of the word. The whole thing is just a succession of processes 'in the sensory and motor centres'. But how is it that the perception of the effects of the object has emotional warmth, while the perception of the object itself is purely cognitive? Why, if perceptions can of themselves have this warmth, is it the exclusive property of perception of organic disturbance? The emotional process, we are told, is not peculiar; it resembles the ordinary perceptive processes (ii. 473). How then can one perceptive process of itself suffuse with emotional warmth the cold intellectuality of another? This is not the only case where an opponent can find no better weapon than the very facts whose explanation, it is claimed, forms the peculiar merit of this theory. Objective reference, one of the most essential characteristics of emotion, cannot by any possibility be brought under the formula, consciousness of bodily change. We find (ii. 474) that the perception of the altered condition of muscle, skin, and viscus combines in consciousness with the perception of the exciting object, and transforms it from an object-simply-apprehended into an object-emotionally-felt. But combination in consciousness of emotion with its object is not what must be understood under the term objective reference. Such a fusion, if admissible, would simply render feeling of subject towards object all the more impossible. This varying attitude of subject to object, so impossible to express in terms of mere consciousness of fact, renders explicable that unique and unanalysable unity which is the characteristic of each emotion. Each emotion is, as Prof. James inadvertently says of the intellectual emotions belief and doubt, 'a psychic attitude,' something 'perfectly distinct but perfectly indescribable in words' (ii. 284, ii. 287). This does not mean that emotions cannot be classified. Human beings in the same world naturally react in similar ways; though each reaction is in itself something distinct and unanalysable. For this quality the mere consciousness of various bodily changes is no sort of a substitute. It seems to be implied that the various sensations fuse into a single

mental fact. Sensations, however, cannot combine in this fashion, and it is not difficult to see that as a matter of fact they don't. In fear, for instance, the trembling and heart-throbbing stand out in consciousness against each other and the remaining organic disturbances. It is not surprising to find so much stress laid upon combination of the different elements. There is an uncomfortable similarity in the bodily changes in all emotional states of the same strength. In joy, as well as in fear, we may have trembling, paleness, heart-throbbing, while the remaining internal disturbances are for the most part distinguishable, more from the character of the emotion which gives rise to them, than from any intrinsic difference. This emphasis on combination, however, proves too much, for, as the expressions of any emotion vary indefinitely, we really have an indefinite series of combinations in each case, that is, an indefinite number of particular emotions. To allow this impossible combination, therefore, is to let difficulties multiply. The theory is brought face to face with a dilemma. If the combination be regarded there are too many different emotions, if the elements be taken into account all emotions are too much the same. But in this case even the modified satisfaction of settling on one horn, as comfortably as may be, is denied. Where different emotions have common constituents, stress must be laid on the combination alone; where the same emotion has varying constituents, stress must be laid on the common elements alone. It really is difficult to play "Hamlet" in a satisfactory way after leaving out Hamlet himself. Concrete cases can be adduced to indicate how futile is the attempt to account for the facts by means of bodily changes alone. How is it that the emotion may vanish suddenly, while the bodily changes remain and die away slowly? An object on being abruptly presented in certain circumstances may cause intense fear. On being recognised as familiar the terror may vanish instantly, and, while the mental mood has changed, for a measurable lapse of time at least, all the bodily effects of the former state are present. The truth is, complicated series of bodily processes are physically incapable of changing as mental processes may. So, in the case of conflicting emotions, what permutations and combinations of bodily changes can correspond to the rapid appearance, disappearance, and reappearance of the various psychical moods? We may become clearly conscious of the bodily condition only after the emotion has spent its strength. Where emotions are so strong as to have become settled for a time, the bodily changes may be out of all proportion to the strength of

the psychical disturbance. Habitual melancholy, though it may have a physical cause, can hardly be maintained to be in all cases merely the permanent consciousness of an abiding bodily disturbance. Finally, it would be interesting to know how the humble everyday consciousness of bodily change becomes transmuted into emotion. No addition of oxygen to oxygen will produce water, and it cannot be, therefore, that so much bodily change appears in consciousness just as bodily change, and that an addition of so much more causes emotion to arise. Even to a believer in mental chemistry the metamorphosis presents no easy problem.

This then is the complete answer to the assertion that the spiritual element cannot be detected. It is not impossible to distinguish it from organic change, though it is impossible to separate it from bodily modification of some sort. The theory which really discards it cannot explain the facts, and some of them it cannot even express. The present theory, which pretends to discard it, presupposes it directly on occasion, and in general sinks it in the object. The proof both direct and indirect in favour of the purely psychical element is thus very strong, and 'experimental evidence' is not wanting. In the case cited on page 455 are present practically all the conditions of the experimental test, which Prof. James has invoked. The patient was entirely anæsthetic inside and out with the exception of one eye and one ear. Yet he manifested grief and shame on appropriate occasions, also fear, anger, astonishment. Prof. James raises the abstract doubt, that he went through the emotional expressions 'in cold blood'. Some such doubt is always possible in reference to the emotions of others, but where no ground is given it can carry no weight whatever, and the mere statement of the possibility cannot disguise the fact that the whole weight of the evidence is in favour of the opponents of a purely physiological theory of emotion.

The rest of the argument need only be lightly glanced at. The second and third objections are not very important, but the answers furnish some interesting material. For instance, it is quite true that a passion dies if expression is refused, but it is not very clear how this can be stated, if the expression is the passion. Where is the line drawn between the action which is constituent of emotion and the action which is result? Again, it is maintained (rightly enough), that the majority of emotional manifestations are in organs over which we have no control. There can therefore be no control of emotion, and it is not very obvious what support the

theory can derive from the alleged fact, that to go through the outward movement alone is an infallible way of arousing the emotion itself. It is not possible, as elsewhere hinted, that the outward expressions may by a sort of sympathy call up those internal disturbances, over which we have no control, and on which 'the chief part of the felt emotion depends'. If the bodily changes vary there can be no fixed connexion between outward and inward, and the first condition of the possibility of this sympathy is wanting. Those cases, where actors are mastered by the emotion of their parts, are very far from supporting the position in whose favour they are adduced. Anybody could at once become a consummate actor if the appropriate object, on being called up, went off instantly of its own accord. Equally simple would be the process if outward and inward expressions were sympathetically united. Actors, however, in such instances make the object appropriate. The actor must put himself in the psychic attitude of the character represented, see things in the same light, and so come to feel towards them in the same way. Whatever outward help may be used, to enter into the proper psychic attitude is the only way in which an emotion can be deliberately called up.

At first sight it is no easy matter to determine, how far the view we have been criticising is supposed to apply to the 'subtler' emotions. When it is asserted (ii. 467) that rapture, love, ambition, indignation, pride, &c., are fruits of the same soil as the grossest bodily sensations of pleasure and pain, the consolation is offered that, at the outset, the subtler emotions had been excepted. Then we find the statement that 'we have, or some of us seem to have, genuinely cerebral forms of pleasure and displeasure, apparently not agreeing in their mode of procedure with the coarser emotions'. The answer to the natural objection which here arises is an insistence that the pleasure in certain pure sensations and harmonious combinations of them is simple, primary and immediate, that æsthetic emotion pure and simple is an absolutely sensational experience. The objection is, that, since emotion admittedly in certain cases follows the perception without the intervention of bodily changes, it cannot be maintained that emotion in general is the consciousness of bodily change. The answer is an insistence, that, in æsthetic emotion at least, the emotion is unmediated by physical change. The objection is that the theory breaks down ; the answer is an insistence that it does. The very fact, that a distinction is made between the primary and accompanying emotions, shows that the strict theory,

which is applied to the latter, cannot apply to the former. The concluding remark in this connexion is to the effect that cerebral processes are almost feelingless, till they summon help from the parts below. This denial of strength to the subtler emotions is at the same time an admission of their independence of organic change. Yet, from the description of the emotional process at the close of the whole argument (ii. 473-4), one must infer that the theory, at first applied to the coarser emotions alone, is supposed to have been successfully applied to the others without modification. Not only are admissions made here, the full significance of which seems to be overlooked, but it is always implied, that it is necessary for opponents to produce an emotion entirely free from bodily results. In the case of the intellectual emotion, this purely spiritual entity is sought for in persons whose mere emotional sensibility has been blunted. As one would naturally suppose, the emotions of a person, whose emotional sensibility has been blunted, are found to be rather pale and cold. For the rest we have a series of statements whose relevancy is more than questionable. It is perfectly true that familiarity may blunt emotion; that an expert is not always thrilling with emotion before his subject; that a critic may condemn or praise on insufficient motives, or on different grounds from other people; and that the perception of rightness is different from the emotional thrill which may follow. The introduction of these details, however, merely obscures the real point at issue. Similarly there is nothing proved by the statement that, "unless we thrill at the case of justice," our state can hardly be called emotional at all. A believer in the ordinary theory could even say that, unless our body thrills, there is no emotion. The assertion can simply mean that emotion is necessarily accompanied by bodily change of some sort. It is the harmless statement of a matter of fact which nobody denies.

A review of the whole argument shows how slim and unstable the foundations are on which the theory rests. We have seen that the first contention breaks down, not only in the case of the subtler, but in the coarser emotions also. The admissions made under the pressure of fact alter the first part of the theory altogether, and thus render the second impossible. The proof of the latter is in any case singularly weak. The argument which supports it is an open fallacy; the concrete evidence depends on a confusion which conceals the fact, that mere consciousness of bodily change is not emotional. So far from it being impossible to detect the spiritual element, the statements of the theory itself show

how impossible it is to do without it. The test case is unquestionably antagonistic. The subtler emotions are the most vulnerable part of the position, and, precisely where the proof should be strongest, there is hardly a show of proof at all.

It cannot be said that appearances are more inviting, if, apart from the proof adduced, we examine the implications of this view and the Psychological principles on which it is based. It is essentially a sensational theory of emotion, and, whatever admissions are made, this position is always maintained. Thus the difference between the primary feeling of beauty and the accompanying emotions is simply that the one is sensation, the others are composed of sensations. The objection to this position does not rest on the belief that sensational processes are 'vile,' but on the fact, that we would have a large number of complete mental states without any element of feeling in the common acceptation of that term. An examination of the definition of emotion will make this clear. We find that, 'in physiological plan and essence, emotion and instinct are essentially the same'. Instinct is 'a mere excito-motor impulse, due to the pre-existence of a certain reflex arc in the nerve centres' (ii. 391). 'A particular perception calls forth particular movements and that is all.' The difference between emotion and instinct is purely external, and does not always hold. A particular perception, then, calls forth particular movements, we perceive these, and that is the whole emotional process. This connects itself with the fact that feeling is described as sensation, and habitually classed with the secondary qualities of objects. 'The nearer the object cognised comes to being a simple quality like hot, cold, red, noise, pain, the more the state of mind approaches pure sensation' (ii. 1). 'The pleasure given us by certain lines and masses, and combinations of colour and sound, is an absolutely sensational experience' (ii. 468). These statements again follow naturally from the general psychological position. The substantiation of this assertion will bring to light the real principles, on which this feelingless theory of emotion is based.

At the start Prof James professes a pure automatism (i. 182). What is habitually used, however, is a theory of brain causation. 'The schematism we have used [in association] is taken immediately from the analysis of objects into their elementary parts, and only extended by analogy to the brain. And yet it is only as incorporated in the brain that such a schematism can represent anything *causal*. This to my

mind is the conclusive reason for saying that the order of presentation of the mind's material is due to cerebral physiology alone' (i. 593). 'Whatever the physical peculiarity may be, it is the cause why a man, whose brain has it, reasons so much, whilst his horse, whose brain lacks it, reasons so little' (ii. 366). 'I do not see how any one can fail (especially when the mythologic dynamism of separate 'ideas' is translated into that of brain processes) to recognise the fascinating simplicity of some such view as this'¹ (ii. 576).

'Sensations and thoughts are but cross sections, as it were, of currents whose essential consequence is motion, and which no sooner run in at one nerve than they run out again at another' (ii. 526). The nervous current comes in, then, emits a flash of consciousness, and (having satisfied the proprieties) pursues its outward course by the path of least resistance. This is what is meant by the statement that all consciousness is impulsive. On such a view, however, consciousness can have no real power; it is merely an incident in a motor process. So we find that the assertion appears in the modified form, 'consciousness or the neural process which goes with it is in its very nature impulsive' (ii. 535). When Prof. James recollects himself, however, he says, bluntly enough, that the dynamism of the ideas is mythological, it is the nerve processes that are active. These nerve currents help and inhibit one another. The feeling of will power being exercised is simply that of the breaking up of an inhibition. 'A waking man's behaviour is at all times the resultant of two opposing neural forces' (ii. 527). Several things obscure the fact that this is the real foundation on which the psychological system rests. One, already mentioned, is the assertion that consciousness is in its very nature impulsive. Another is the form which is kept up in places, of a theory of pure concomitance. But it is evident, from what has been said, that there can be no 'blank unmediated correspondence' of mental states and brain states. The mental process can no more accompany the physical without danger to its independence than a sheep can accompany a hungry tiger, and to talk of expressing the mental fact in terms of brain processes has the same sinister significance as to talk of expressing the sheep in terms of tiger tissue. Equally unwarranted and equally

¹ The emphasis here is on 'idea,' not on 'separate'. Prof. James does not object to the dynamism of separate brain processes, and finds that his brain scheme gives 'a certain basis of reality to those hideously fabulous performances of the Herbartian *Vorstellungen*' (ii. 585).

misleading is the introduction of the selective power of consciousness. This activity is only invoked when mechanical reasons fail (ii. 584). Mechanical reasons, however, can never suffice unless the unity of the self is denied. Having once made this denial, and claimed the majority of human volitions to be 'resultants of interests and associations whose strength and sequence are mechanically determined,' one cannot on occasion bring back the self without any more ado. The self cannot thus appear on earth in time of need and vanish again to some heavenly abode. Either it is always there and must always be reckoned with, or it can be dispensed with altogether. A mechanical theory, such as the one we have been discussing, necessarily ignores feeling, for its explanations involve the denial of the unity of life as well as that of conscious self.¹ When the present theory of emotion is found to belong to a system of Psychology, in which feeling can find no place, the full significance of the mechanical descriptions of the emotional process becomes evident. This view of emotion is seen to form part of a system of purely physical determinism, in which the unity of self and organism are alike set at naught.²

We do not require to be satisfied with abstract statements here. It is not difficult to see that in consequence of its mechanical form the theory in question gets into inextric-

¹ I cannot do better than refer to Prof. Seth's article in the *Contemporary Review* (April, 1893), in support of this assertion, that explanation by means of 'nervous currents' and 'paths of least resistance' denies that unity of life, of which feeling is the inward expression.

² Prof. James does not mean to establish a purely mechanical theory. He sees, of course, that such an attempt must fail. The trouble is that the higher principles are merely put alongside of the lower, the latter being adhered to without change. Though, for instance, admissions are made with regard to feeling (ii. 583-4), it is never recognised as the first result of every stimulus on any organism whatever, and, as reaction of the living being, inconsistent with the notion of nervous currents making their way through the organism in a purely mechanical fashion. Similarly, the mechanical conception of mere ideas (without feeling) 'exploding' into action is supposed to be reconcilable with the conception of their dependence on a self. The whole difficulty arises, in the first instance, from the delusion that it is treating Psychology 'as a natural science,' to deny it the assumptions its subject-matter demands, and to found it on those of Physics. When this is found to be impossible, one would naturally expect that the views, founded on presuppositions that turn out to be inadequate, should be revised in light of the further hypothesis called in. This is not done, however, and, since the additions are not justified, nor shown to be reconcilable with the original assumptions, they must be treated as excrescences. Needless to say, if this revision had been carried out, the analysis of emotion into sensory and motor elements would have been found inconsistent with the fundamental hypothesis of Psychology.

cable difficulties. To explain one aspect of the facts, the physical effects due to any particular perception must be regarded as 'pre-ordained'; to explain another aspect, they must be held to 'vary indefinitely'. Pre-ordained changes that vary indefinitely will always be somewhat of a mystery to those not accustomed to overcome 'dialectical oppositions'. Taking a special instance, we find that the peculiar rapidity with which emotions 'blunt themselves by repetition' is due to the 'peculiar fact,' that the diffusive wave of reflex effects tends always to become more narrow. This is simply expressing the fact in physical terms, and offering it thus disguised as its own explanation. Besides, when one is repeatedly angry with the same person on the same grounds, it does not seem to be always true, that on the second occasion the anger is necessarily less, and that by every repetition it gradually tapers off. Nervous currents may have many peculiar qualities, but, once started in any direction, there is a fatal lack of elasticity in their working which no addition of other properties will make good.

Here, as elsewhere in Psychology, the self must be presupposed to render the facts intelligible. The self reacts as a whole to stimulus, and one phase of this reaction is that feeling towards the object which we call emotion. The essential element in any emotion is the particular way in which the subject is disposed towards the object. This is not pleasure or pain though it may be dependent on these forms of feeling. Feeling in general must not be confounded with pleasure and pain simply. Under feeling should be included on the one hand pleasure and pain, and on the other that feeling towards the object, which for the present we may call feeling attitude. The term is not unexceptionable, but is used for convenience instead of some such formula as 'feeling in relation to,' 'feeling in regard to'. Both classes of feeling are expressions of the unity of the self, and as such cannot be presented. Pleasure and pain, however, are directly effects of the object on the subject. They differ from feeling attitude in that the line of direction, so to speak, is from the object to the self, while in the latter it is from the self outwards. One may hate a person who has caused him pain, but the hate is not the pain caused. It is an attitude towards the individual, which is *per se* not pain at all, but a distinct feeling with a peculiar character all its own. So melancholy is simply a certain way of feeling towards the world in general. It again may be caused by pain, but is itself a characteristic feeling that is not pain, and may indeed be accompanied by a dismal sort of pleasure. The

feeling of good-will towards all men, which is felt in certain happy conjunctions of circumstances, is not pleasure afforded by the world in general. It is as distinct and yet as inseparable from the pleasure felt at the moment as concave from convex. It is in truth impossible to feel pleasure or pain *towards* an object, and common language is not guilty of the confusion here involved. It makes a distinction between being pained and having bad feelings towards somebody in consequence. The confusion in Psychology between the two is the less excusable since they do not necessarily accompany one another. Bad feeling-towards does not, inevitably result when pain is caused. The same thing holds in the case of pleasure. If I am an ascetic, the fact that an object gives pleasure does not cause any favourable feeling towards it, but the reverse. It is not a sufficient account of the matter, therefore, to say that an object is perceived, pleasure or pain felt, and action in consequence results. At the very least the emendation must be made, that, on account of the pleasure or pain, the object is felt towards in a certain way. It is this attitude of feeling on the part of the self which is the ultimate determinant of the nature of the action. If hate and fear as feeling are simply so much pain, it can never be evident why the pain from the object should in the one case cause flight and in the other a blow. If, on the other hand, these emotions are recognised as totally distinct ways of feeling towards the object, the difference in the actions is easily explicable. Further, the feeling attitude is determined not on Hedonistic grounds alone, but by all the relations in which the object stands, or is imagined to stand, with regard to the self, or the self chosen for realisation. As the relations are almost indefinitely numerous, so are the attitudes of feeling. Finally, though feeling attitude must always intervene between cognition and action, felt pleasure or pain need not. The mere thought of a pleasure impels the voluptuary to action. Though the anticipation of pleasure remembered or inferred is active, this does not introduce a link of actual feeling, for the anticipation of a feeling is not feeling. It is true that the thought itself may give pleasure, but this determines his attitude only to the object as ideal. The appropriate action here is retention of the *thought*. When the thought is realised the determinant is not pleasure in the thought, but that attitude towards the object which is due to the anticipation of pleasure remembered or inferred. In such a case, on the ordinary view, there would be a complete mental state without any element of feeling. The distinction, therefore, must be made

between feeling in regard to the object, and feeling directly caused by it. In both cases it might be said that the feeling is caused by the object, but in the former it is mediated more by the activity of the self. It is in all cases possible to avoid bad feeling, it is not always possible to avoid being pained. Under feeling attitude should be included emotion, interest, sentiment, habitual moods and temperament, certain feelings which hover on the verge of emotion such as content and discontent, and others which at present have no very definite place in Psychology, such as expectation, preference, indifference, tolerance, the *blasé* feeling. It is not easy to see how all these can arise if feeling is synonymous with pleasure and pain.

In the case of emotion attempts have been made to distinguish the peculiar feeling from ordinary pleasure or pain by the fact that it has an object. This is so far right, in that it brings out the fact that emotion is feeling towards an object, but, as has been stated, just for that reason it cannot be pleasure or pain. Further, it is not possible to distinguish the different emotions from one another chiefly by means of the intellectual element present in the special concrete state. In no sense can cognition and feeling fuse, and if this happened the objective reference of emotion would disappear. If the feeling element in any particular emotion is pain, it is pain all the world over whatever be its object or cause. But hate and fear do not differ in that the amount of pain is different. Conceivably enough 'this might be the same in both, and the difference could never be so great as the distinction between the two. Nor are they distinguishable in that the object is different. This is purely external, and does not meet the fact that the feelings themselves are perfectly distinct. If it is difficult to imagine the process by means of which consciousness of bodily change is transmuted into emotion, the transformation in the case of pleasure and pain is equally mysterious, and, if the difference between emotions cannot be accounted for by the variation of common physical elements, still less can it be explained by the more limited variations of two purely psychical elements. The facts of the case are, that emotion as feeling is ever distinct from pleasure or pain, and each emotional feeling is unique in kind.

It is not sufficient to separate emotion from feeling as pleasure or pain; it must be further distinguished from the other forms of feeling attitude. Usually, if the action follows at once, feeling in this sense does not appear in consciousness at all, and is known only by its effects. From the con-

scious forms emotion is distinguished by its strength and felt diffusedness. Strength does not necessarily imply violence. The violent emotions, which have all marked bodily results, are connected with the self in the selfish and narrow sense of the word. There are emotions really stronger in which the organic perturbation is not so great, and in them the felt diffusedness is prominent. There is a diffused and relatively permanent glow of feeling which may be quite peaceful. The ordinary expression 'deeply moved' seems to bring out what is perhaps the most characteristic feature of emotion as distinguished from feeling attitude in general. Our whole being is moved; we act as one and feel that we do so. This sense of unity is, of course, the characteristic of all strong feeling. The distinction between emotion and the other degrees of feeling attitude is necessarily to some extent a shifting one. No sharp line can be drawn, and forms normally weak may rise on occasion to emotional strength.

Every emotion has bodily effects of some sort either external or internal. There is nothing anomalous in either class of effects, though an air of mystery seems to hang round both in all the ordinary accounts of emotion. The external results are usually summed up under the term 'emotional expression'. These, however, are not the only emotional expressions by any means. In anger, for instance, the primary expression is doubtless a blow, not a facial or merely bodily movement. The so-called 'emotional expressions' ending with the body are due to the natural outlet being stopped, either by the sheer violence of the feeling, or by various restraining influences. Even were they the only expressions, they are not, as they stand, a whit different from any other feeling-prompted actions. In strong emotions the ordinary internal effects of feeling on the body are intensified, and we have what is perhaps the most peculiar physical effect, namely, organic perturbation. The immediacy of this result and its prominence in consciousness has given rise to the definition of emotion as a compound of spiritual and physical elements. This seems to me to obscure the essential nature of the fact. If emotion is essentially a purely psychical process with bodily results, then, in the interests of clear thinking, it should be separated from its concrete concomitants. It is, of course, an abstraction when so separated. The case is different if it be maintained that emotion is essentially a mixture. Such a theory, however, has little to recommend it, and is never, I think, seriously meant. The general hesitation to separate

emotion as such from the concrete emotional state is a fact of some significance. Dr. Ward, for instance, asserts that emotion is a concrete state and must not be confounded with feeling, for besides the pleasure or pain there is a definite object and a characteristic expression in action. As already pointed out, all feeling as the last determinant to action must have a definite object, and, since the nature of the action is determined by the nature of the feeling, all feeling of this sort has characteristic expression. The strange thing is that, after being analysed into knowledge, feeling and will, the concrete state should be kept sacred from actual analytic separation. This procedure is no mere matter of terminology. It is evident from the reasons given, that it is due chiefly to a want of clearness as to the nature of the purely psychical element. So long as emotional feeling is regarded as mere pleasure or pain, so long can you distinguish the feeling element in the concrete state without being able to separate it even in thought. It is only when the characteristics of emotion are brought within the feeling itself, and the real nature of the spiritual element thus brought to light, that the latter can be separated out and a really effective answer made to those theories which deny its existence.

The general conclusion is, that emotion is not consciousness of bodily change but feeling, not pleasure or pain but feeling attitude.