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JAMES WARD'S THEORY OF VOLITION: THE  
BIOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIAL EXPRESSIONS  
OF A THEORY

by

Dale A. Stout

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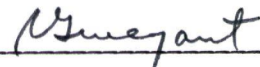
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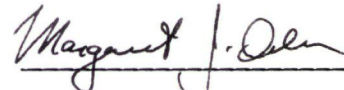
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "James Ward's Theory of Volition: The Biographical and Social Expressions of a Theory" submitted by Dale A. Stout in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.



Dr. R. G. Weyant (Supervisor)  
Department of Psychology



Dr. A. R. Buss  
Department of Psychology



Dr. M. J. Osler  
Department of History



Dr. M. Hanen  
Department of Philosophy

Date: 21 August 1979

## ABSTRACT

In this thesis I have argued that Ward's theory of volition was not merely an "objective" collection and organization of facts. Since James Ward believed in aspects of his inherited traditions and responded to the social tensions of his day, his theory took on attributes of his personal and social character. Consequently, Ward's defense of his volitional ideas reached far beyond an objective organization of facts. He defended, in addition to his personal interests, his interests in a particular social and moral order.

To help the reader arrive at this understanding of Ward's theory of volition, I have emphasized that every theoretical effort operates within certain boundary conditions. These restrictions are provided by the personal history of the theorist and the social milieu within which Ward's theory was spawned.

In demonstrating the biographical and social expressions of Ward's theory of volition, I have been critical of the narrow historiography employed by some psychologist-historians. The subtlety of their presentism tempts them to confine the theoretical expressions of past psychologies to the limits allowed by today's specialized discipline. I have tried to escape this form of presentist history by allowing for social and biographical elements to enter into my discussions of Ward's theory.

On a more general level, this thesis argues that social and biographical factors are tightly knit into psychological theories. In

light of this broader context of theory, I have tried to urge upon psychologist-historians that they adopt a broader historiography. By so doing the psychologist-historian reduces the possibility of producing a presentist history.

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I also thank Allan R. Buss for his honest, uncompromizing criticisms of this work. He sent me in directions I would not have otherwise considered. The theoretical approach I have taken in this thesis was based on a work Dr. Buss has yet to finish.

To Margaret J. Osler I owe the lesson of organization. She taught me the importance of expressing my ideas in the form of an outline. Although I did not consult Dr. Osler as often as I consulted Dr. Weyant or Dr. Buss, her influence was felt through reflections of her critical pen cancelling out the worked over, but needlessly long sentences I am accustomed to writing.

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Marsha Hanen for agreeing to participate in the evaluation of this thesis.

On the financial side I wish to thank the Department of Psychology for generously providing the funds that enabled me to complete most of this work without the distractions of employment outside of my academic interests. I am also indebted to the Province of Alberta for honoring

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To Norma

...who never lost faith and  
never allowed me to.

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## PREFACE

In writing this thesis I have been pursuing primarily one point. I have tried to demonstrate that psychological theories (James Ward's theory of volition in particular) operate within certain boundary conditions. These conditions are provided by the personal history of the theorist and the social milieu within which these theories are spawned. As such, psychological theories are not ahistorical, nonpersonal, socially unbiased constructions. Rather they are polemical documents biased by the personal opinions of the psychologist and are conceived of in correspondence with a particular social context.

Although I believe that personal and social conditions affect current theory construction in psychology,<sup>1</sup> I have argued the above case from an historical perspective. James Ward (1843-1925) was an appropriate figure for this type of analysis.

There are several reasons why I say this. First, he was a major figure in nineteenth century British psychology but he was almost entirely forgotten after his death.<sup>2</sup> This indicates at *least* one point: that his psychology probably had its greatest appeal to specific conditions in a particular culture. Secondly, Ward influenced some important philosophers and psychologists in the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> What makes him most appealing as a subject for this thesis, however, is that he developed his psychology around a theory of volition which clearly guarded personal interests and defended a social philosophy.

The few histories of psychology which have included a study of James Ward have not mentioned the polemical nature of his psychology.

The historiographical approach adopted by these historians appears to have blinded them to the personal and social dimensions of Ward's psychological thought. For instance D. W. Hamlyn in his article "Bradley, Ward, and Stout" suggested that there were few differences between Ward's psychology and the psychology of the associationists.<sup>4</sup> Such a suggestion is possible only if one fails to recognize the intentions, social and personal, of Ward's psychology as contrasted with the social and philosophical intentions of associationist psychology. The few points where Ward differed from the associationists were points which challenged the very foundations, logical and cosmological, upon which the associationists rested their arguments. Brett, a psychologist-historian, wrote as if psychological ideas were all that were at issue in the debate between Ward and Bain.<sup>5</sup> Worse than this, Brett assumed that these disagreements over psychology could be understood solely within a discussion of their psychological ideas. Cardano, another psychologist-historian, has argued that Ward divided himself between psychology and philosophy. Cardano gives his readers the impression that Ward was an experimentally orientated psychologist turned philosopher.<sup>6</sup> A brief perusal of Ward's letters would dispell this misinterpretation of his work. Ward's psychology was an important aspect of his overall philosophy.

The presentism committed by each of these psychologist-historians is subtle. The twentieth century can be characterized as an age of specialization. Today's scholars write and speak to special interest groups and are careful not to make statements which stray beyond the

dimensions of their disciplines. Even today interdisciplinary studies, a relatively new phenomenon in academic circles,<sup>7</sup> is criticized as being inadequate because "only specialists can fully comprehend the details of any one discipline". The psychologist-historian, educated within this tradition of specialization, has inadvertently imposed his/her attitudes towards specialization on to an era which did not necessarily share this attitude.

Without question the nineteenth century was a period where men no longer believed in the possibility of the "Renaissance man". This belief, however, did not temper their enthusiasm to apply the knowledge gained from one discipline to that of another.<sup>8</sup> The Victorians used their educational background as a tool to discuss social, religious and scientific ideas of the broadest nature. As such, developments in their more specialized disciplines were often tuned to various personal and social issues.

These points are common knowledge to anyone who has endeavoured to read in the nineteenth century. Yet psychologist-historians have been slow to broaden their studies of past psychologies to include a social and biographical perspective. The presentism inherent in their historiography, committed in the name of "intellectual history", seriously limits their historical perspective. By imposing their specialized interests in one discipline on to the same discipline one hundred years in the past, they fail to recognize that nineteenth century psychologists intended to address questions much broader and varied than those issues which can be forced in the theoretical boundaries of one discipline.

A more serious problem surfaces, however, when the psychologist-historian shuns the social and biographical content of psychological theories: they increase the risk of emphasizing theoretical issues which were not central to the psychologist's efforts. As such the psychologist-historian unnecessarily skews his/her historical account of a psychological theory.

In adopting an historical approach to argue the case that psychological theories express both social and biographical conditions, I hope to avoid the pitfalls of the presentisms I have already mentioned. As such I have arranged this thesis around three chapters. The first presents a pertinent and pervasive social debate which troubled the Victorians. This chapter brings the reader in touch with the social ideas and conceptions which were available to James Ward when he was developing his psychological ideas.<sup>9</sup> The second chapter attempts to present the biographical conditions which marked Ward's life. In light of these personal struggles and ambitions, the reader can reflect on the social ideas which would be most attractive to Ward when he was wrestling with his view on psychology. In the third and final chapter I attempt to demonstrate the biographical and social expressions of Ward's theory of volition. I have chosen to examine Ward's theory of volition because it was the focal point of his entire psychology.

The historiography I have employed in this thesis was developed with the works of several historians kept in mind. Thomas Kuhn was influential because he effectively demonstrated that scientific developments could not be accounted for solely within explanatory models which ignored

biographical and social-intellectual variables.<sup>10</sup> This influence on the history of science can be measured in part by the trend among historians of science to include within their discussions of scientific developments a portrayal of the pertinent social-intellectual and biographical conditions. In some ways these histories influenced my own historical approach more directly than did Kuhn's work. These works endeavoured to flesh out the skeleton which was provided by Kuhn in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.

Frank Turner in a book titled Between Science and Religion argued that certain scientific approaches were developed as an alternative to the popular conception of science which was being promoted by naturalism. Turner's thesis exposed the polemical nature of scientific arguments. The first chapter of this thesis reflects Turner's influence.

The second chapter is owing to the influence of Howard Gruber. In his book Darwin on Man he utilized biographical data to broaden our understanding of Darwin's evolutionary ideas as they pertained to Darwin's views of human nature. In a similar manner I have attempted to employ biographical materials from Ward's life to broaden our understanding of his theory of volition.

The influence which the biographical and the social-intellectual conditions had on Ward's theory of volition was a relationship I outlined in light of J. D. Y. Peel's work titled Herbert Spencer: The Evolution of a Sociologist. In this book Peel skillfully combined social, intellectual and biographical factors to provide a fuller understanding of Spencer's sociology.

In closing one point must be reiterated. The words of Turner, Gruber and Peel influenced the historiography I adopted in this thesis. These works,

however, might not have come to my attention had Kuhn been unsuccessful in his appeal for a broader historiography. Kuhn's pioneering work brought to a focus the importance that social, intellectual and (to some degree) biographical considerations had for enhancing our understanding of scientific developments.

## Notes:

### Preface

<sup>1</sup>I am not alone in this belief. K. Gergen has argued that social factors are tightly knit into any form of social psychology, past or present. See his article, "Social Psychology as History". Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1973, 26 (2), 309-320. J. Harwood has recognized the role played by both personal and professional factors in the race-intelligence controversy. I refer the reader to his two articles: "The race intelligence controversy: A sociological approach I--professional factors." Social Studies of Science 6 (1976), 369-394 and "The race-intelligence controversy: A sociological approach II--external factors." Social Studies of Science 7 (1977), 1-30. Also A. R. Buss has taken into account social and biographical considerations in his evaluation of contemporary theories of personality. He has not as yet completed his work.

<sup>2</sup>Ward was a psychologist who has not escaped the recognition of some historians and philosophers of psychology. L. S. Hearnshaw in A Short History of British Psychology, 1840-1940, (London: Methuen, 1964) suggested that Ward's work should be placed "...among the masterpieces of the philosophy of mind." (pg. 36). J. Passmore commented that Ward dealt "...a mortal blow to the British tradition of associationist psychology." See his work A Hundred Years of Philosophy. (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1975), pg. 82. G. Murphy in Historical Introduction to Modern Psychology, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1949) commented, "...he had written a highly influential article...which probably did as much to define the broad trends that were remaking British psychology as any single book in the era..." (pg. 437). F. Turner in Between Science and Religion, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) attributed to James Ward that he "...almost single-handedly...destroyed the philosophical pretensions of Victorian scientific naturalism..." (pg. 202). Despite these laudatory remarks no one has written a complete history of James Ward and his thought, psychological and philosophical. Ward was not just a critical scholar, he also aided in psychology's development in Britain. For instance he was the first editor (with W. H. R. Rivers) of the British Journal of Psychology (1904). He was also an editor for Mind.

<sup>3</sup>Ward had an influence on Bertrand Russell. Russell in his own biography expressed his gratitude to James Ward's friendship. G. E. Moore received some of his philosophical directions from Ward. In psychology F. C. Bartlett enthusiastically attended Ward's classes on psychology. He too has expressed his indebtedness to Ward's teaching.

<sup>4</sup>Hamlyn, D. W. "Bradley, Ward, and Stout." In B. B. Wolman (editor) Historical Roots in Contemporary Psychology. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pg. 299, 311.

<sup>5</sup>Brett, G. S. Brett's History of Psychology. Edited and Abridged by R. S. Peters. (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1974), pg. 676-677.

<sup>6</sup>Cardano, J. A. "Victorian Psychology: A biographical approach." Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences 1 (1965), pg. 166. Actually Cardano made the error of assuming S. Lee to be correct in his brief biography of Ward in The Dictionary of National Biography (part II). (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

<sup>7</sup>S. Toulmin made this suggestion in "From form to function: Philosophy and history of science in the 1950's and now." Daedalus, 1977, 106 (no. 3), pg. 145, 154, 159.

<sup>8</sup>B. Mackenzie suggested that Darwin's eclectic approach demonstrated that "...a wide variety of kinds of evidences could legitimately be applied to the study of fundamental problems about living organisms." See his article "Darwinism and positivism as methodological influences on the development of psychology." Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences 12 (1976), pg. 334.

<sup>9</sup>In this chapter I have used the term 'social' in a rather loose and perhaps ambiguous manner. I have used the term 'social' to refer to the broader intellectual context as it discussed social issues. The term, as I have used it, refers to an array of social beliefs and values as they were shared by members of a given community. The term 'social' used in this manner is not completely foreign to historians of science as T. Kuhn used the word 'sociological' to refer to the same conditions I have assigned to 'social' (See The Structure of Scientific Revolutions Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962. pg. 175). Perhaps a more appropriate way of talking about these conditions is to refer to the 'social-intellectual' context.

<sup>10</sup>Kuhn's concept of paradigm emphasizes the importance of an intellectual tradition while his thoughts on normal and revolutionary science reflect on the importance of certain social conditions (the manner of education of students within a tradition and the interests scholars might have in maintaining the status quo). The biographical factors and their relationship to scientific developments are more obscure in Kuhn's work. He hinted at these influences when he referred to the changes in his own scientific outlook. See the preface to The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (op. cit. in note 9) and the preface to his most recent book The Essential Tension (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).



## CHAPTER I

### A CONTEXT OF CONTROVERSY: SPIRITUALISM

#### VERSUS NATURALISM

Two opposed and equally presumptuous cosmologies were in conflict; each was to discover an appropriate role for the other; but each feared, with what may seem justification to many moderns, that the final supremacy of the other would lead to moral and intellectual chaos.<sup>1</sup>

Too frequently historians have portrayed the nineteenth century as a battle ground between science and religion. Although there is a degree of truth to this generalized portrayal, it can be misleading. That is, one is led to believe that scientists were in conflict with religious scholars (as exemplified by the Huxley-Wilberforce debate) or that nineteenth century intellectuals, after 1859, held that science was discordant with religion. Neither alternative is completely correct in its depiction of the last century. More accurately, scientists opposed other scientists and religious persons were challenged by religious notions which were at variance with traditional conceptions.

The intellectual turmoil which marked the second half of the past century, then, cannot be entirely accounted for within discussions of the conflicts which surfaced between science and religion. What has to be recognized is that the nineteenth century provided a context where the "old" was challenged by the "new".

The industrial society promoted lifestyles which were at variance with the old ways. The laissez-faire approach to capitalism was being challenged by a new liberalism which was founded on democratic and socialistic principles.<sup>2</sup> Young men and women were no longer attracted

to the church; at least not to the degree they were in the 1830's.<sup>3</sup> The church's social function as an organization which brought people together to exchange ideas was being eroded by the growth of various clubs which were organized for the sole purpose of discussing ideas--theological and secular.<sup>4</sup> After 1850 there was an increase in the growth of journals which were dedicated largely to discussions of new approaches to society, literature and science. Many articles either attacked old ideas while promoting a new approach or defended the traditional position while criticizing the "more progressive" ideas. In literary circles there was a tendency among some scholars to romanticise the middle ages as being free from the chaos which characterized modern society.<sup>5</sup> The nineteenth century talked of *progress*, the *new* science and the *new* psychology.

Such contrasts between the "old" and the "new" are many. One particular conflict between the "old" and the "new", however, had a bearing, directly or indirectly, on most of the controversies of this century. This conflict involved two opposed world views: Spiritualism, the representative of the more traditional world view, and Naturalism, the representative of the world view which had become identified with the "new science".<sup>6</sup>

Naturalism had become by the 1860's the operating cosmology for many eminent scientists. This cosmology proposed that matter was the fundamental constituent of the natural order. Beyond this phenomenal sphere nothing could be known.<sup>7</sup> Nature was perceived to be the servant of the mechanical order of universal laws. James Ward satirized

Naturalism as arguing that:

...every thought that has ever stirred the hearts of men, not less than every breeze that has ever rippled the face of the deep, has meant a perfectly definite redistribution of matter and motion.<sup>8</sup>

The cosmological mechanisms of matter and motion determined all that could be known and understood. If phenomena could be reduced to the principles of matter and motion, scientific explanations could proceed no further. This reduction constituted the last analysis of any phenomenon.

Not all eminent scientists, however, were Naturalists. Spiritualism opposed many of the central tenets of Naturalism and argued in favour of the traditional role of the scientist as a natural theologian of sorts. Spiritualism rejected the mechanization of nature while at the same time it maintained that Nature was lawful. It did not see this as a contradiction. The Spiritualists regarded Nature as a dynamic living force. Unseen powers rested behind the appearances of nature. These powers drew phenomena into relationships which were observable and could be *described* by universal laws. Explanations of the natural order had to wait upon the disclosure of these unseen forces.

These two opposed cosmologies did not restrict their arguments to the issues of science or to what constituted a scientific explanation. They were both eager to establish the ground work for a social philosophy. They did conflict, however, in their opinions over how the traditional moral values could be brought into line with the new interpretations of man which were emerging from recent developments in science, particularly those developments in the biological sciences.

It was into this context of controversy that James Ward was baptized. Some of the issues emerging from the conflicts between Spiritualism and Naturalism directed his education and sharpened his social consciousness. These intellectual directions and the personal social philosophy which Ward articulated from these conflicts were tacitly included in his theory of volition. An understanding of the controversies which surfaced between Spiritualism and Naturalism becomes a necessary prerequisite to understanding Ward's theory of volition.

## II

The central difference between these opposed views of nature rested on different understandings of the concept of causal powers.<sup>9</sup> Naturalism was content with a form of Humean causality. All we can know, according to this view, is the associations between phenomena.<sup>10</sup> For the most part Naturalists perceived force only as an abstraction, a necessary bridge until the mechanical principles of nature could be disclosed. For example Karl Pearson commented that:

...force as a cause of motion is exactly on the same footing as a tree-god as the cause of growth--both are but names which hide our ignorance of the *why* in the routine of perceptions.<sup>11</sup>

Spiritualists, on the other hand, perceived anthropomorphic forces to be the determinants of the natural order. They argued that events in nature were caused by powers inherent in the phenomena. W. B. Carpenter typified this perspective. Roger Smith commented that Carpenter:

...used the term "force" as a shorthand for a genuine causal agency where such agency was intelligible in terms of the experience of volition.<sup>12</sup>

The Spiritualists would point out that although these powers could not

be directly observed their existence could be inferred from their effects on the natural order.

Although the debate between these two *Weltanschauungen* seldom proceeded along the lines of a discussion of causality, the issue of causal powers was at the heart of their disagreements.<sup>13</sup>

### III

The resonance resulting from the clash between these opposed world views was loudest during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The acoustics necessary for the amplification of these reverberations were provided by a particular interplay between social and scientific ideals. That is, Victorian intellectuals attempted to maintain allegiance to a social-moral order which was built up from Christian ideology while at the same time justifying this order on the basis of a scientific approach.<sup>14</sup> They argued that some form of moral intuition permeated all ethical systems and that the identification of this moral intuition could be scientifically grounded.<sup>15</sup>

Such an interplay of ideas, however, presented a paradox for the Victorian minds. Where "moral intuition" had been traditionally aligned with Christian ideals of free will, the scientific justification for "moral intuition" rested on the assumption that all events were determined by universal laws. For social-moral purposes man had to be free. Yet to have a scientifically valid view of human nature, humanity had to be determined.

To be informed as to the development of this paradoxical theme we have only to turn to a brief examination of Malthus's influence on

the past century. Malthus's most germane idea for the Victorians was his proposal that there were events which impeded progress.<sup>16</sup> Populations grew geometrically while food supplies grew arithmetically. If people would not morally restrain themselves from increasing populations, progress would stop and a vicious competition for a limited food supply would bring death to many members of the species.

The impediment to human progress via the lack of moral restraint inspired the Victorian social consciousness. In the hands of the Natural Theologians the Malthusian idea was quickly generalized beyond the moral restraints of human reproduction. The benefits of moral restraints, and the evils of self indulgence, were applied to all facets of human life.<sup>17</sup> Society would flourish if individuals would obey their moral intuitions. While continental Europe believed that social disorder was largely the product of material conditions (established institutions, social class, etc.), the British believed that social disorder was the result of individual moral decay.<sup>18</sup>

This emphasis on the social importance of an individual's morality remained unchallenged throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup> However, as psychology grew more Naturalistic and as physiological research began to challenge traditional conceptions of free will, the traditional ideals of moral sentiment became more difficult to assimilate into a scientific social philosophy.

The task shared by Naturalism and Spiritualism was one of maintaining the existent social-moral order while simultaneously resolving the impinging paradox between ideals of free will and the universal deter-

minism which seemed to be an unavoidable condition of scientific explanations. Where Naturalism and Spiritualism clashed was in the manner by which they resolved this paradox.

#### IV

I suggested earlier that the heart of the conflict between Naturalism and Spiritualism was reflected in the different views of causality each cosmology employed. As such, when these *Weltanschauungen* attempted to resolve the paradox between human freedom and determinism as it surfaced in their social philosophies, they arrived at very different resolutions. Their differences of opinion with respect to causality were expressed both in their philosophies of science and in their views of human freedom.

To probe further into these differences I shall proceed by first examining how Naturalism resolved the paradox through its proposal of a social materialism.<sup>20</sup> In this solution volition was reduced to physical descriptions so as to bring it into line with its determinist philosophy of science. Following this account I will turn to Spiritualism's solution of the paradox. This solution involved a plea for a broader philosophy of science upon which it could rest both its defense of free will and its moral socialism.

Naturalism regarded the volitional experience as an epiphenomenon of physical events. A psychical event could not cause a physical event as the former was the product of the latter. Volition, then, had no causal powers in the physical realm. This bias of thought is reflected in an intellectual descent which began with Alexander Bain, proceeded

through Spencer and culminated in the works of John Hughlings Jackson.

Bain's portrayal of this position was not made clear in his own psychology. He did, however, lay down some important inroads which made this position viable. For instance, Bain began assimilating associationism into a physiological context.<sup>21</sup> He attempted to move psychology from its traditional basis in philosophy to a new place among the natural sciences.<sup>22</sup> Bain's philosophical upbringing in the mentalism of Locke, Hume and Reid, however, provided a barrier which prevented him from making the transition from psychology to physiology complete.

In spite of this shortcoming, Bain did introduce into British psychology the sensory-motor paradigm. As it was this paradigm which eventually made it possible for Naturalism to expand its determinist position to include human actions, we shall examine this contribution from Bain's psychology.

Bain was explicit in linking volition to muscular movements.

When the will has reached the summit of general command...it is fit for any mode of exertion that can be represented to the mind; the mere visible idea of the movement to be effected will single out the reality.<sup>23</sup>

The way in which volition was linked to muscular movement was like that of a stimulus-response mechanism. The *idea* of movement effects the muscular change just as an electrical shock causes a muscle to contract. It should be pointed out that these "ideas" of movement were not the products of a spontaneous self who transcended the cosmological order. Rather all ideas were the products of the laws of association. Bain



commented,

We cannot, by mere will, command one set of ideas to arise rather than another, or make up for a feeble bond of adhesion; *the forces of association are independent of volition.* (my emphasis)<sup>24</sup>

Volition played no part in the association of ideas. Moral ideas, then, had to be gained from the environment or else they were innate.

What role did volition play in Bain's psychology? One of its functions was to direct attention.

...the will can control some of the conditions of intellectual recovery: one of which is the directing of the attention to one thing present rather than another.<sup>25</sup>

What Bain proposed was a view of humanity where an individual's ideas were the products of the laws of association. When certain of these ideas were attended to via the volitional process, actions were carried out. Ideas served as the stimulus to motor responses. The mechanism through which the sensory-motor action was possible was human volition.

Bain's ideas were a stimulus to many of his contemporaries and the evolution of his ideas at the hands of these scholars is a story too long to detail in this chapter. I should point out, however, that Spencer's and Bain's ideas meshed. Spencer provided an evolutionary basis for the mechanism of the association of ideas.<sup>26</sup> This helped psychology to make the transition to science. But as Spencer's volitional ideas do not differ in form from Bain's, I will not outline Spencer's contribution. Rather, I shall examine a scholar who was strongly influenced by Spencer, John Hughlings Jackson.

What sets Jackson's volitional ideas apart from those belonging to Spencer and Bain was that he based his volitional theories on a physiology which was not Spiritualist.<sup>27</sup> As such, Jackson's theories made no appeals to present psychical events as being causal antecedents to physical events. Naturalism had for some time waited for someone to work out the details of such an approach to human actions. From early on, Naturalism regarded volition as a hypothetical construct which would be surrendered to a mechanical analysis of the relationship between ideas and movements. Jackson succeeded in providing such an analysis and therefore removed volition from the spheres of physical causality.

Perhaps this last comment is a bit overstated. What Jackson did was expand the sensory-motor paradigm to the higher centers of the brain. He commented,

I am supposing the nervous system to be a sensori-motor mechanism, from bottom to top; that every part of the nervous system represents impressions or movements or both.<sup>28</sup>

Put more strongly,

I particularly wish to insist that the highest centers--physical basis of mind or consciousness--have this kind of constitution, that they represent innumerable different impressions and movements of all the parts of the body...If the doctrine of evolution be true, all nervous centers must be of sensori-motor constitution.<sup>29</sup>

Jackson was so successful in accomplishing his task that many scholars, convinced of the sensory-motor nature of the cerebral cortex, no longer saw any need for spiritual powers (such as volition) to connect the "higher centers" (ideas) to the "lower centers" (motor).

Jackson's physiology provided Naturalism with a physical basis for

its views of psychophysical parallelism. The mind cannot cause physical events, only physical events can cause physical events. Charles Mercer commented on Jackson's views,

He said once that if he could be convinced of an interacting dualism he should abandon the study of the nervous system; his implication being that dualism means the negation of law. All expressions that imply interaction or community of nature between body and mind, such as "psycho-motor" or "the center for ideas" he called scientific blasphemy.<sup>30</sup>

Jackson stated his view more succinctly,

There is no physiology of the mind any more than there is a psychology of the nervous system.<sup>31</sup>

As a psychological idea, volition had no place in Jackson's physiology. Psychological events could not cause physical events. Jackson relied on the doctrine of psychophysical parallelism to achieve his theoretical ends. He claimed that volition, if it was to be discussed at all as a basis for action, had to be understood from a physiological perspective. He commented,

The physical basis of volition consists of nervous arrangements, representing movements; the particular volition of the movement is, on the physical side, the survival of the fittest movement of the whole organism during activities of the center for volition.<sup>32</sup>

The term 'volition' or 'will' too often implied a psychological dimension. As such, Jackson would rather have avoided using terms that implied a psychological causality for physical events. He stated,

The term "most voluntary" when used in contrast to "most automatic" is very objectionable. It is a compound of a psychological and a physiological term. Instead of it, I suggest the expression "least automatic", which is rigidly equivalent to what is called

"most voluntary"...The substituted expression does not imply an abrupt division into the voluntary and the automatic, but implies degrees from most to least automatic, and that man, physically regarded, is an automaton, the highest parts of his nervous system (highest centers) being least automatic; the *substituted term does not bring the will, a psychical state, into a purely physical sphere.* (my emphasis)<sup>33</sup>

Both of the above quotes reflect the optimism Jackson had with regard to talking of volition in strictly physical terms. In the last quote his application of the sensory-motor paradigm to the entire nervous system is evident. It was on the basis of this paradigm that Jackson suggested a new terminology which did not reflect the psychical nature of the term volition. This new terminology being "least automatic".

Volition as a psychological event was little more than a marker for a physiological event which was in turn determined by physical laws.<sup>34</sup> Volition was considered merely as an epiphenomenon of physical events.

I chose Jackson to represent the Naturalist's views on volition not just because his ideas were widely read or referred to. Rather, Jackson's discussions of volition epitomized what most Naturalists held to be true *in principle*.<sup>35</sup> The optimism that volition would eventually be ascertainable through physical terminology was shared by most Naturalists. It was with the aid of this optimism that Naturalism proposed a social philosophy which attempted to ground ideals of moral intuition on the principles of a narrowly defined science.

The physiological work of J. H. Jackson and David Ferrier inspired Naturalism with the confidence that man was an automaton.<sup>36</sup> Man did not possess free will, he was an instrument of nature. Naturalism,

in accepting that humanity was governed by law, emphasized man's innate constitution rather than his rational mind.<sup>37</sup> The organization of society, then, was understood to be the consequence of the efficiency by which man's dispositions and habits had been selected and preserved. Accordingly, moral intuition was seen as an "instinctive associating of the good with the pleasurable and the pleasurable with the life preserving."<sup>38</sup> Moral intuition was governed by law and evolved according to the survival of the fittest.

In an earlier section I pointed out that attempts to fix the traditional ideals of the social-moral order on a scientific foundation suggested a paradox. That is, while these traditional ideals rested on a belief in free will, scientific explanations seemed to demand some form of determinism. Naturalism attempted to resolve this paradox by eliminating the possibility of free will. They reinterpreted "moral intuition" on the basis of evolutionary principles taking into account evidence provided from physiology. People behaved according to their moral intuitions because this "intuition" was only a psychological marker for a physical event. Individuals could not do other than act on their moral intuition. Individual freedom was a psychological state not a physical state. Naturalism, in removing free will from the realms of physical causality, resolved the paradox at the cost of a belief which many Victorians held to be confirmed by human experience.

Many nineteenth century intellectuals felt that Naturalism's resolution of the paradox lacked what we today might call "ecological vali-

dity".<sup>39</sup> These intellectuals were opposed to the implicit erosion of individual responsibility inherent in doctrines proposed by the Naturalists. It was protested that if people act according to physical laws they are not responsible for their actions. Success or failure, good behaviour or bad behaviour, could not be attributed to an individual's efforts; these were merely the products of physical conditions. Naturalists attempted to meet these objections, and others like them, but the cost of doing so was often reflected in inconsistencies and a bloated scientific optimism.<sup>40</sup> In the final analysis, Victorians were reluctant to surrender to a world view which did not recognize "real" human freedom (and therefore "real" human responsibility) as a basic social unit. Perhaps the eventual collapse of Naturalism in the twilight years of the nineteenth century was because more than a few Naturalists shared this sentiment.

As I have already indicated, Naturalism's ideas on volition, and their implications for a social materialism, were met with protest. William Carpenter, a longwinded proponent of Spiritualist principles, commented in 1879 that,

...after an attentive re-examination of the whole question (of human automatism), I find nothing in the results of more recent researches to shake the conviction at which I arrived nearly forty years ago, of the existence of a fundamental distinction, not only between the Rational actions of sentient beings guided by experience, and the Automatic movements of creatures whose whole life is obviously but the working of a mechanism, but also between those actions (common to Man and intelligent brutes) which are determined by a preponderating attraction towards an object present to the consciousness, and those (peculiar, as I believe, to Man) in which there is, at one stage or another, that distinct purposive

intervention of the self-conscious Ego which we designate Will, whereby the direction of activity is modified.<sup>41</sup>

After writing this rather long sentence, Carpenter went on to level a criticism against Naturalism,

...dwelling exclusively on Physical action as the only thing with which Science has to do, and repudiating the doctrine (based on the universal experience of mankind) that the Mental states which we call Volitions and Emotions have a causative relation to Bodily changes, they appear to me to grasp only one half of the problem, to see only one side of the shield.<sup>42</sup>

Carpenter's statements provide an adequate summary of Spiritualism's concern to defend a traditional view of volition. For instance he made a distinction between rational actions and automatic actions, between goal directed actions and actions which were subject to intervention by the human will. These distinctions reflected an assumption common to Spiritualists, particularly to their views on physiology.

Spiritualists divided the nervous system into higher and lower orders of function. They contended that the lower centers were for sensation and movement (reflex) while the higher centers possessed (executive) decision making functions. The higher order system, the cerebral cortex, was a unitary organ characterized by its properties of agency. Lower centers were passive, the recipients of commands issued from the active and spontaneous higher order. A statement from Mueller's Elements of Physiology exposes this assumption.

The fibers of all the motor, cerebral and spinal nerves may be imagined as spread out in the medulla oblongata, and exposed to the influence of the will like the keys of a piano-forte.<sup>43</sup>

This strict division of the nervous system into higher and lower

orders of function, a distinction blurred by Naturalism,<sup>44</sup> mirrored the tendency within Spiritualism to organize their physiological ideas around the unifying concept of the will. As such they had an instrumentalist view with respect to the human body. That is, the body was the instrument of the will. Mueller's use of the "piano-forte" was a telling metaphor. Human volition was expressed through the body, it was not an expression of the body.

How the will excited the body was unknown and this was a problem which received little discussion from the Spiritualists. This silence on the part of Spiritualism has bothered some historians.<sup>45</sup> However, it is possible that Spiritualism was silent on this issue because it did not see it as a problem. The will causing changes in the body fit with Spiritualism's views of causality. It saw no need to supplant this explanation of bodily changes with an explanation which rested on the physical causality of matter affecting the motion of matter. That the psychical could affect the physical did not violate their expectations for the natural order; there was nothing which needed explaining.

Contrasted with Naturalism's reliance on the sensory motor paradigm as an organizing principle, Spiritualism organized its physiology around the concept of volition. Accordingly, Naturalism regarded the reflex as the basis for understanding all forms of human action while Spiritualism regarded most reflex actions as degraded, mechanical forms of voluntary acts, "secondary automatic" response.<sup>46</sup>

Carpenter's criticism that Naturalism saw only "one side of the



shield" because it dwelled only on physical action was motivated by his belief that reflex action was a degraded form of voluntary acts. Spiritualists believed that until the Naturalists recognized that unseen forces affected the physical realm, Naturalism would never outgrow its tendency to pass off descriptions of phenomena as explanations. Explanations of reflex action did not lie in further descriptions of physiological mechanisms but in the recognition that individuals, through volition, had the power to affect physical actions.

The concept of volition provided Spiritualism with the boundary conditions within which human nature was interpreted. Man was free and spontaneous. Individuals were responsible for their own actions. Their actions were not entirely conditional on physical antecedent conditions. In The Methods of Ethics Sidgwick commented,

The belief that events are determinately related to the state of things immediately preceding them, is now held by all competent thinkers in respect of all kinds of occurrences except Human Volitions.<sup>47</sup>

This belief in the reality of human freedom meshed with the traditional social philosophy because the ideals of moral intuition were not threatened. However, the paradox suggested by the Victorian's interests to both maintain a social philosophy based on assumptions of free will and to ground this philosophy on science (which to many scholars in the 1870's implied a determinism) had yet to be resolved by the Spiritualists.

Unlike the Naturalists who resolved the paradox by undermining traditional notions of free will, Spiritualism's solution of this paradox turned on a proposal for a broader definition of science. Its

resolution challenged the narrow view of science which had grown in popularity due to the public image given to it by Naturalism. For example Roger Smith commented that Carpenter,

...believed that good science would be able to produce laws "which express the *universal conditions of the action of a Force*" or, in other words, a true and spiritual causal agency.<sup>48</sup>

Spiritualists believed that science should not be so narrowly conceived so as to include only observable phenomena occurring in a strict and uniform regularity.

Spiritualism's defense for a new philosophy of science, however, was often based on negative arguments. They became better critics of the science proposed by Naturalism than proponents of a new or more satisfying philosophy of science.<sup>49</sup> It was probably the inability of Spiritualism to formulate its own philosophy of science that led to the death of this movement among scientists in the century which followed. More to the point, it was this inability which prevented Spiritualism from succeeding in its resolution of the paradox between human freedom and the scientific demands for determinism.

#### V

Both Naturalism and Spiritualism failed in their bids to resolve the paradox which surfaced in their social philosophies. Neither cosmology successfully brought its interests to maintain a social order based on individual moral intuition into line with their scientific optimism.

Naturalism failed because in its attempt to undermine the ideals of free will it undermined the social appeal of its own doctrines.

Most people were not attracted to a social philosophy which denied humanity the freedom each individual knew to be true to his/her own commonsense experience. As Brown remarked,

Voltaire's epigram that if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him, is paralleled by the profoundly human conviction that even if freewill does not exist, we must and do act as if it did.<sup>50</sup>

Spiritualism failed because it could not formulate a convincing philosophy of science. Its criticism of Naturalism perhaps swayed people to look in its direction. All the Spiritualists had to offer, however, was metaphysics when most Victorians sought after the certainty promised by science.

The eventual success or failure of these cosmologies is not critical to this thesis. Rather it is the issues which surfaced as a result of the clash between these cosmologies that is of importance. These issues both directed attention to certain intellectual problems and motivated scholars to seek solutions for these problems. These issues, then, provided the stimulus which influenced both the ambitions and the philosophies of the individuals who grew up within this controversial context.

James Ward grew to maturity during the period of time when the conflict between Naturalism and Spiritualism was at its peak. His mind was the scene of a tug-of-war between these cosmologies. He was at one time drawn towards Naturalism and at another time he was attracted to Spiritualism. Although James Ward eventually embraced the ideals of Spiritualism, he never forgot the lessons he learned from the Naturalists. Ward's theory of volition was a construction which clearly demonstrated his debt to both of these Cosmologies.

In this chapter I have tried to make clear some of the ideas and

issues which surfaced from the conflict between Naturalism and Spiritualism. The touchstone which gauged the purity of these ideas on either side of the debate resided in their social philosophy. The ideas Ward utilized in constructing his psychology of volition were chosen from this array. Why he chose to defend Spiritualism's ideas is a question which has to wait upon the completion of the chapter which follows. In that chapter Ward's intellectual struggles are viewed from a personal, biographical perspective rather than from the social perspective adopted in this chapter.

## Notes:

A Context of Controversy: Spiritualism  
versus Naturalism

<sup>1</sup>A. W. Brown, The Metaphysical Society: Victorian Minds in Crisis, 1869-1880. (Columbia University Press: 1947), pg. 238.

<sup>2</sup>A. R. Buss, "Galton and the Birth of Differential Psychology and Eugenics: Social, Political and Exonomic Forces." Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences 12 (1976) 47-58.

<sup>3</sup>Owen Chadwick, The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century. (Cambridge University Press, 1975), pg. 6

<sup>4</sup>A few examples of the clubs which surfaced during the nineteenth century were The Apostles (1820), The Metaphysical Society (1868), The Synthetic Society (1896), The Moral Sciences Club, the Chit-Chat, The Natural Sciences Club, The Fabian Society (1884). There were many more but the ones already mentioned covered topics of discussion which ranged from theology (the Synthetic Society) to science to social issues (the Fabians were interested in spreading socialist ideas).

<sup>5</sup>Alice Chandler, A Dream of Order: The Medieval Ideas in 19<sup>th</sup> - Century English Literature. (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, 1970).

<sup>6</sup>The debate between Naturalism and Spiritualism can not be identified with the debate between science and religion. Both Naturalism and Spiritualism proclaimed a philosophy of science and a philosophy of religion. Some prominent Naturalists were T. H. Huxley, J. Tyndall, H. Spencer, G. H. Lewes, and to some degree J. H. Jackson, K. Pearson and D. Ferrier. Some of the adherents to Spiritualism were A. R. Wallace, H. Sidgwick, F. W. Meyers, J. Ward and W. B. Carpenter. All of these men were contemporaries and often included remarks from their opponents in their own writings.

<sup>7</sup>Frank Turner, Between Science and Religion: The Reaction to Scientific Naturalism in Late Victorian England. (New Haven, 1974), pg. 18.

<sup>8</sup>James Ward, "Naturalism", Encyclopaedia Britannica (11<sup>th</sup> edition), pg. 88.

<sup>9</sup>A good discussion of this issue has been provided by David B. Wilson in "The Concept of Physical Nature: John Herschel to Karl Pearson." in Nature and the Victorian Imagination edited by U. C. Knopelmacher and G. B. Tennyson (University of California Press, 1977), pg. 201-215.

<sup>10</sup>W. K. Clifford, a confirmed Naturalist, believed that scientific knowledge consisted of generalizations resulting from contingent components in experience. He commented, "The cause is the fact that at one moment the thing is so." (quoted from R. Smith's article "The Human Significance of Biology: Carpenter, Darwin and the *vera causa*." in Nature and the Victorian Imagination (op. cit. in note 9).

<sup>11</sup>Karl Pearson, The Grammar of Science (London, 1892), pg. 144. This was quoted from D. B. Wilson's article "The Concept of Physical Nature: John Herschel to Karl Pearson" op. cit. in note 9.

<sup>12</sup>Roger Smith, "The Human Significance of Biology: Carpenter, Darwin and the *vera causa*." (op. cit. in note 10) pg. 229-30.

<sup>13</sup>A clear expression of the differences between the philosophies of science adhered to by Spiritualism and Naturalism can be found in the debates between J. S. Mill and William Whewell. These debates have provided the topic for two papers: "Whewell's Philosophy of Scientific Discovery" (Philosophical Review 60 (1951) 56-69.) written by C. J. Ducasse and a paper by E. W. Strong titled "William Whewell and John Stuart Mill: Their Controversy about Scientific Knowledge." (Journal of the History of Ideas 16 (1955) 209-231.).

<sup>14</sup>J. W. Burrow, Evolution and Society (Cambridge University Press, 1966), pg. 102.

<sup>15</sup>J. D. Y. Peel, Herbert Spencer: The Evolution of a Sociologist. (Heinemann: London, 1971). Peel argues that Spencer shared this goal with his contemporaries. I refer you to his chapter on "Social Statics", pg. 97-102. Also, this concern is apparent in James Ward, more so in his letters (particularly those addressed to Wolstenholme) than in his works.

<sup>16</sup>Robert Young, "Malthus and the Evolutionists: The Common Context of Biological and Social Theory." Past and Present 43 (1969) 107-145. Young developed this theme in sections IV and V of his paper.

<sup>17</sup>This was evident in the Bridgewater Treatises of the 1830's. For example Thomas Chalmers contributed a work titled The Adaptation of

External Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man. (London, 1833). One year prior to this contribution he published a work titled On Political Economy, in Connection with the Moral State and Moral Prospects of Society. Chalmers emphasized the struggle between the moral and the natural realms. He believed that chaos would result in the event of the loss of human moral values which were, for the most part, Christian. For a discussion of this point I refer the reader to Robert Young "Malthus and the Evolutionists" (op. cit. in note 16), pg. 120-125.

<sup>18</sup> See Owen Chadwick The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century (op. cit. in note 2), pg. 231. Also Hock Guan Tjoa George Henry Lewes: A Victorian Mind (Harvard University Press, 1977), pg. 49. This point was not overlooked by John M. Robinson in his book The Improvement of Mankind: The Social and Political Thought of John Stuart Mill. (University of Toronto Press, 1968), pg. 127-128.

<sup>19</sup> Owen Chadwick, The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century (op. cit. in note 2), pg. 232. This acceptance of the importance of traditional moral values was not even challenged until the closing years of the nineteenth century when the works of Nietzsche were beginning to have an impact on British culture.

<sup>20</sup> I describe the Naturalist's social prescriptives as 'materialistic' despite the fact that they would dislike this terminology. I think Brown was insightful when he commented, "Both [Huxley and Clifford] clearly proposed a physical and naturalistic cosmology; and however explicitly they disclaimed "materialism", each left materialism as a residual philosophy after attacking all other interpretations of the origins of life." (The Metaphysical Society, pg. 232, op. cit. in note 1). I think Brown's comment applies equally to their social opinions.

<sup>21</sup> Edwin Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology. (Appleton: New York, 1950) pg. 236.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Young, Mind, Brain and Adaptation in the Nineteenth Century. (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1970), pg. 120.

<sup>23</sup> Alexander Bain, Mental and Moral Science (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1868), pg. 340.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pg. 341.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pg. 341

<sup>26</sup>Robert Young, Mind, Brain and Adaptation in the Nineteenth Century. (op. cit. in note 22), pg. 150.

<sup>27</sup>This was not true of either Bain or Spencer. Bain used Mueller's and W. B. Carpenter's physiology, both of which were Spiritualist. As such, Bain had volition, an unseen force, placed in a "command" position in the higher levels of the nervous system but he had considerably reduced volition's repertoire of commands.

<sup>28</sup>James Taylor (editor), Selected Writing of John Hughlings Jackson. (Basic Books: New York, 1958), vol. II, pg. 78.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., vol. II, pg. 72.

<sup>30</sup>I quoted this passage by Charles Mercer from a paper authored by H. T. Engelhardt Jr. titled "John Hughlings Jackson and the Mind-Body Relation." Bulletin of the History of Medicine 49 (1974) no. 2, 137-151, pg. 145.

<sup>31</sup>Selected Writings (op. cit. in note 28), vol. I, pg. 417.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., vol. II, pg. 65.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., vol. II, pg. 68.

<sup>34</sup>Huxley, like Jackson, suggested in his Belfast address to the British Association (1874) that "volition was not the cause of a voluntary act but the "symbol in consciousness" of that state of the brain which is the immediate cause of that act." (quoted from W. B. Carpenter, Principles of Mental Physiology (Kegan Paul and Co.: London, 1879) in the Preface to the fourth edition, pg. XXII.

<sup>35</sup>Naturalists such as G. H. Lewes had been looking for "volitional centers" in the 1850's. In addition, the debate surrounding the Pfluger-Lotze controversy (about 1853) involved discussions of the physical nature of volition. For both of these points see F. Fearing's book Reflex Action: A Study of the History of Physiological Psychology. (M. I. T., 1970), pg. 161-186.

<sup>36</sup>For example Carpenter commented in 1879 that Naturalism asserted that "...the inevitable conclusions of Physiological science are now advanced in proof of the doctrine of Human Automatism..." Principles of Mental Physiology, Preface to the Fourth Edition, pg. XIV.



<sup>37</sup>R. J. Halliday, "Social Darwinism: A Definition" Victorian Studies 14 (1971) pg. 394.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pg. 394.

<sup>39</sup>A. W. Brown, The Metaphysical Society (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 103.

<sup>40</sup>These inconsistencies were reflected in Huxley's works. Some of these inconsistencies have been exposed by Sydney Eisen in "Huxley and the Positivists" Victorian Studies 7 (1964) 337-358. He attempts to show that Huxley's criticisms of Positivism undermined his own social philosophy. Frank Turner in Between Science and Religion (op. cit. in note 7) has documented the bloated scientific optimism of the Naturalists in his second chapter. I suggest, not Turner, that this optimism was at least in part a strategy used to put off criticisms. Turner comes close to saying this on pg. 17 and on pg. 22.

<sup>41</sup>W. B. Carpenter, Principles of Mental Physiology (op. cit. in note 34), Preface to the Fourth Edition, pg. XV.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pg. xv.

<sup>43</sup>Quoted in Robert Young, Mind, Brain and Adaptation in the Nineteenth Century (op. cit. in note 22), pg. 116-117.

<sup>44</sup>I say this because Jackson applied reflex action uniformly to both the higher and the lower orders of the nervous system. This application of the sensory-motor paradigm had a leveling function: the higher centers were placed on a continuum with the lower centers which were entirely reflex in nature.

<sup>45</sup>David Hartley coined this term in 1749 in Observations on Man. The term was used to describe habits which had become so ingrained in the person's behavior that they acted like reflexes.

<sup>46</sup>Robert Young brings up this problem in "The Functions of the Brain: Gall to Ferrier (1808-1886)" Isis LIX (1968), pg. 257.

<sup>47</sup>Quoted in W. B. Carpenter, Principles of Mental Physiology (op. cit. in note 34), Preface to the Fourth Edition, pg. xvi.

<sup>48</sup>Roger Smith, "The Human Significance of Biology: Carpenter, Darwin and the *vera causa*" (op. cit. in note 10), pg. 230.

<sup>49</sup>This was definitely true of James Ward. His psychology had an impact because of its tight criticisms of Associationism but his proposed psychology had not yet been formulated in heuristic terms. Frank Turner's book Between Science and Religion discusses the critics of scientific Naturalism and it becomes evident that the negative contribution outweighed, in most cases, the positive insights into an alternative philosophy of science.

<sup>50</sup>A. W. Brown, The Metaphysical Society (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 103.

## CHAPTER II

A PHILOSOPHER OF FAITH: THE  
BIOGRAPHICAL-INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>

...his experience had taught him self reliance and quickened his initiative; he had found out things for himself and also found himself and the life which suited him. It was therefore not merely theory but also his own experience that led him to stress the fact of activity in the interpretation of mind, the method of trial and error in its growth, the greater importance of guidance than instruction in education, and the value of freedom in the whole of life.<sup>2</sup>

This comment written by William Sorley in his obituary of James Ward touches on the theme of this chapter. Ward's psychological theory of volition reflected more than the juxtaposition of a set of ideas he inherited from a past philosophical tradition. In addition his theory embodied subtle expressions of the intellectual struggles, the conflicting motives which marked his personal goals. Ward's theory of volition guarded strong personal interests in the freedom of humanity and in a belief in God.

Ward's life was one characterized by the tensions of personal and intellectual struggles. This was not uncommon, as many of the individuals who grew up during the turbulent years of the third quarter of the nineteenth century suffered a similar fate.<sup>3</sup> In these years individuals both benefitted from the industrial revolution and lost a great deal (a fast buck could be earned as quickly as it could be lost). Individuals raised in this culture understood the opportunities an education could bring as well as the financial wealth needed to attain

such schooling. Those who were very interested in pursuing an education but lacked the means had to teach themselves. This constituted Ward's first intellectual struggle.

Ward's father, like many upper class fathers, was an educated man who desired the best education for his son. James Ward Sr.'s intentions, however, were blocked by financial shortcomings; only one of the painful effects of a series of poorly planned business adventures. Consequently James Jr., embarrassed by his father's failure, had to leave school at an early age. James Ward, like Herbert Spencer, was self taught during his formative years.

During these years James studied natural history and mechanics. He taught himself calculus and became a rather sophisticated ornithologist by the age of fifteen. These interests were typical of many members of Ward's generation. Darwin was stuck on the study of barnacles. Voyages to the south seas were not uncommon and field trips were frequent for any one interested. Natural history filled the hours of those boring work days endured by surveyors employed by the British Railroad. Both Wallace and Spencer developed their interests in natural science while employed as surveyors. Paley's book on Natural Theology encouraged the interests of the young clergy to seek for God's hand in Nature. Buckland lectured the working classes on natural history and the crowds were substantial. In the last century Natural history became a proving ground for theories, theological, social and scientific. Collections of rocks, bugs and flora became the hobbies Victorians chose to entertain their company with on boring Sunday

afternoons. As a matter of fact it is difficult to think of any prominent Victorian who did not foster an interest in natural science.

Ward deviated slightly from the course chosen by most Men of Letters when he took up with architecture. The drawings he completed for his father's inventions suggested to an architectural firm that James Jr. was a suitable candidate for an apprenticeship. Such work, however, removed James from participating in the intellectual debates which drew the attention of so many Victorian minds. Ward resigned from the firm with renewed interests in pursuing an education.

Ward was careful in choosing an appropriate discipline on which to focus his studies. His parents were members of a fire and brimstone, hell, heaven and salvation evangelicalism which marked the attitudes of many Congregationalists.<sup>4</sup> As such James was brought up in a narrow tradition which honored service to others and down-to-earth common sense.<sup>5</sup> Ward's zeal as a Sunday school teacher prepared his way for the nonconformist religious education he chose to pursue.

Ward, being older than the other students at Spring Hill College, took his religious education more seriously. He challenged his teachers and formulated his own ideas on theology. He undertook study for a London B.A. and on the completion of this rejuvenated his interests in science by taking up study for a B.Sc. His years at college were marked by a growing doubt concerning religious questions and his theology had broadened beyond the narrow limits suggested by his evangelicalism.<sup>6</sup> This broadening experience was as painful for Ward as it was for a great many of his colleagues. Nearing the completion of his

study at Spring Hill, Ward was offered a job as pastor at the Congregational Chapel at Cambridge. He declined and sought a scholarship to study abroad. He needed time to reflect on his theological concerns.

On winning a scholarship James travelled to Germany to study theology under Dorner in 1869.<sup>7</sup> The materialism which confronted him in Germany both shocked and attracted his mind.<sup>8</sup> The shock would be lasting but the attraction soon turned to criticism. While in Germany Ward came to a deeper appreciation of Kant and was strongly influenced by Hermann Lotze. This time abroad marked the year in which Ward grew the most and to which he "owed so much".<sup>9</sup>

To advance one's career by studying abroad was a strategy common to many Victorians.<sup>10</sup> In Ward's case, however, this experience added fuel to the confusion which was already burning up his early ambitions. By 1870 he was drawn to the clergy out of an allegiance to his family's interests and no longer by the calling of his heart.<sup>11</sup> He desired a life of study; he needed more time to work through an "apology for Christianity based on first principles".<sup>12</sup>

It was in Germany that Ward laid down his basic plan for a personal philosophy. The central ideas for his psychological theories are found in his letters written in 1870. It was with these ideas that Ward was going to construct his apology for Christianity. Yet the growth of these concepts into his eventual synthesis was stunted for many years by his continued depressions and doubts about his future career. Ward wanted to work out the details of his newly discovered philosophy but felt pressured by family and friends to enter the clergy.

In 1871 Ward accepted the call to the Cambridge Chapel only to resign before he completed a full year of service. The personal tensions were too great, his sermons too liberal and his patience too short. Ward's reputation as a liberal theologian stood in the way of the church's desire to build a new edifice. Ward resigned disillusioned and disappointed.

The Church did not provide a fertile ground for Ward's efforts to demonstrate that science and religion need not be opposed. He turned to Cambridge University in the hope of working out the details of his philosophy. In 1875 he was elected to a fellowship in Moral Sciences and he returned to Germany to study physiology with Ludwig in 1876. In 1878 he began to lecture on psychology for the Moral Science Tripos. He was appointed to the staff of Trinity College in 1881 "by the good offices of Sidgwick". With the comfort which came with financial security, Ward began to turn his thoughts to marriage and in 1884 he was wed to Mary Martin who was a lecturer at Newnham College. In 1887 Ward was elected to the new chair of Mental Philosophy and Logic at Cambridge. In 1889 he received an honorary degree from Edinburgh. Ward remained at Cambridge until his death in 1925.

This brief biographical overview does little in the way of presenting the personal aspects of Ward's life. It does, however, place Ward in a light that was shared by many young men who pursued a life of Letters. Like many of his contemporaries Ward was optimistic about the value of education. His course of study, moving from philosophy to science, was a journey made by many. The trips abroad and Ward's

love for Nature matched the cultural interests and attitudes of the Victorian age. The development of his philosophy, however, did not share the directions of the majority. He placed his allegiance with a vocal minority who opposed Naturalism. This brief overview provides the context of events within which Ward's personal philosophy evolved.

## II

The evolution of Ward's personal philosophy grew out of internal tensions characteristic of a religious man who was convinced that science could make claims to certainty. This tension was created because the scientific ideals of the time suggested to Ward the implausibilities of religion while his practical life was a testimony to the truth of his religious convictions. Ward's resolution of this tension culminated in a philosophy which held that our knowledge of the world was based on metaphorical reasoning.

The most immediate knowledge we have is that of our own mental states--of ourselves: on the analogy of ourselves we build our knowledge of things without...<sup>13</sup>

He wrote this in 1870 just after his return from Germany. In 1872, still struggling to work out the details of a philosophy based on this approach, he had "become more distinctly conscious of the need of knowing this self better" before he could "better know other things".<sup>14</sup>

Without a doubt it was under the influence of Hermann Lotze that Ward crystallized this approach.<sup>15</sup> Lotze's philosophical strategy, however, had an impact on Ward because by the time he had reached "Göttingen (where Lotze taught) he was in intellectual and emotional ruins. He needed more than ever to find a new scheme around which he



could reconstruct the principles of his "old" life.

This degeneration of Ward's psyche began when he was confronted by the materialism which dominated the intellectual scene in Germany.<sup>16</sup> The impact that this confrontation had on Ward's life was enhanced by his earlier religious convictions.

Ward had been brought up in the ways of a narrow evangelicalism. Sinful behaviour was the result of disobedience to the Christian creeds while ethical behaviour, though still the actions of a sinner, emanated from a religious conscience. Practical living was so closely connected to the Christian creeds that whatsoever affected the one affected the other. Life's problems found their solutions in theology and "good" theology in turn prescribed "good" living.

Ward easily mastered the simplicity of this philosophy and became expert at applying it to others as well as to himself. Being the eldest in the family he had plenty of opportunity to practice as his brother and sisters often turned to him for advice. His biographer commented that he was "in his own home the leading light and stern authority on most matters".<sup>17</sup> His correspondence with home often involved the family seeking advice and Ward freely, and at times sternly, giving it. As a Sunday School teacher he was authoritative and often exhorted the boys and girls "to think of the Judgement, and reflect upon the eternal fires".<sup>18</sup>

By the age of 19, Ward had become a leader not only in his home but also in the community.<sup>19</sup> Once James left home to attend college his parents often wrote telling him how his "flock" was progressing,

and how much the community as a whole missed him.<sup>20</sup> Ward found it difficult to abandon his responsibilities as a community leader. As such he wrote long letters full of austere evangelical advice to both friends and family.

Christianity, conceived of in the terms of a narrow evangelicalism, served as the basis for Ward's social philosophy. However, as James pursued his education he began to question the home grown doctrines which anchored his Christian beliefs to his practical living. At one time he found comfort and security in his religion but now these seemed far off. His faith in the old creeds was waning; yet he could not let go of the practical moral directives this religious evangelicalism had stamped on to his common sense perceptions.

These early religious convictions were the sources of Ward's inner turmoil for he had to detach himself, with much pain, from a world view which had guided his early ambitions. In 1870 he wrote,

It is hard to clear away the wreck of what hither to has made up life, given to it its significance and hope, and to form a new and chilling view of the world and of oneself, to feel that to be here, and to be a man is so different a thing from what we had ever thought it.<sup>21</sup>

What had jarred Ward into the realization that the old narrow ways of his evangelicalism could not survive with him was his experience in Germany.

In 1869 Ward won the Dr. Williams Scholarship which provided the means for him to study abroad. He sought to be activated by new ideas and the letters he received from his friends studying in Germany filled

him with anticipation. Ward travelled to Berlin where he gained entrance into Dom Candidaten-Stift, a college for young ministers.

Here, under the direction of Dorner, James encountered the idealism of the speculative theologians. This school of thought held that the deeper truths of the Christian life were revealed by the divine spirit in the "recesses of the moral consciousness and through the light of reason".<sup>22</sup> Because Kant brought together the moral and the intellectual realms he was an important figure for these theologians.<sup>23</sup>

Kant's importance however was superceded by the works of Fichte. Fichte defined and explained moral consciousness, a fact assumed by Kant.

Fichte argued that moral consciousness was attained when the harmony was established between the "empirical or individual self and the underlying universal self".<sup>24</sup> This underlying universal self was termed the "Moral Order". The universal self in harmony with the empirical self (the individual) was the ultimate spiritual experience; a feeling of being at one with the Moral or Divine Order. The harmony expressed by this unity "afforded a special kind of assurance, the certainty of conscience, a guide for conduct".<sup>25</sup> This theology no longer required moral conduct to be based on the absolute authority of scripture. As a matter of fact scripture provided only examples of how the ancients harmonized their actions with the universal order and nothing more.<sup>26</sup>

By the time Ward reached Germany he was already sympathetic to the problems associated with the verbal inspiration of scripture and sought alternative solutions for the interpretation of the Bible.

Although there is little biographical evidence to suggest whether or not Ward accepted this broadening of theology, these ideas did crop up in his psychology. The activity of self as the basis for a moral theory was common to both speculative theology and Ward's psychology. It is likely that Ward had a favourable attitude towards this theology as he was convinced that Christianity would survive only through the broadening of its doctrines.<sup>27</sup> Also, Ward embraced much of Kant's work and regarded him largely as a religious philosopher.<sup>28</sup> What troubled Ward was not so much the broadening of theology but the directions into which theology developed. As it stood to Ward's perceptions, the materialist's objections were just as poignant with respect to speculative theology as they were to his own evangelical faith. If theology was to be broadened it must not ignore the challenges of the materialists by retreating to a naive solipsism.

The details of the materialist's objections to theology, those objections which troubled Ward, were either not discussed by him in his letters (which is highly unlikely) or his biographer did not feel that they were important enough to include in the "Memoir" as I cannot find a specific discussion of these problems in his published letters. Yet it is clear that materialism caused Ward much distress. In 1869 he wrote,

The immortality of the individual is a vexed question--and as the difficulty springs from a psychological ground so do also my doubts as to the distinction of matter and mind. I cannot find both, and as matter seems to make at times the best claim to be all, I have no foundation for an examination of Christianity...<sup>29</sup>

This comment reveals that Ward entertained the possibility that mind was but the epiphenomenon of matter and therefore had no claims to possess causal powers. Matter determined matter and man was subordinate to the laws of matter and motion. The material world could not discriminate "right" from "wrong" nor moral from immoral. Because of this erosion of values and worth, materialism denied Ward a "foundation for an examination of Christianity".

The logic of this last statement is not overwhelming. Yet if we consider it in the light of Ward's earlier beliefs his dilemma begins to surface.

A few years after his German experience Ward wrote that the "old life" and the "old creed" were so connected "...that what affected the one affected the other".<sup>30</sup> Moral living was gauged according to Christian doctrines and the good life testified to the truth of the creeds. When materialism threatened the belief that actions could be moral or immoral, Ward felt that Christianity was under the gun. That is, if the materialists were correct in posing that there were no "real" moral actions, only actions determined by inert physical antecedent conditions, then the place of religion in this scheme becomes at best ambiguous and at worst irrelevant to human behavior. In a published work written much later Ward commented that according to materialism...

Life and mind now clearly take a secondary place, the cosmical mechanism determines *them*, while they are powerless to modify it. The spiritual becomes the "epiphenomenal", a mere incidental phosphorescence, so to say, that regularly accompanies physical processes of a certain type of complexity.<sup>31</sup>

On the materialist's analysis Ward recognized that Christian principles of conduct could not serve as the "springs" to action. *Practical proofs*, therefore, testified not to the validity of Christianity but to an impartial cosmological order. Materialism, in essence, separated practical actions from personal beliefs. In the absence of this correspondence between belief and practice, Ward felt he was denied a foundation from which he could examine Christianity.

Without a foundation for the examination of Christianity Ward felt that he was

...out in an ocean of darkness where neither sun nor stars have for many days appeared: the whole horizon round in turn seems at every point to be brightening for dawn, but all is cheating fancy.<sup>32</sup>

In despair Ward queried, "Can I ever compact my shattered self into a definite ego whose mind shall reflect the mind of Christ?"<sup>33</sup>

Ward could neither abandon Christianity nor the practical dimensions of his faith (moral guidance) which witnessed to his uncompromising belief in God. He struggled inside himself trying to find a solution to the dilemma posed by a practical life that demanded a God and a philosophy which at every turn seemed to cancel the claims of Christianity. With anguish Ward wrote, "How is a disciple of modern thought to be religious?"<sup>34</sup> This inner tension caused by a convincing confrontation with materialism motivated Ward to seek a solution to put his uneasiness to rest.

After the disintegration of the "old creed" at the hands of the Germans, Ward sought a formula which would once again align his belief in God with his practical living. Ward's search would end but only

after he experienced more frustration as he knew not which course to take to achieve his ends.

My reason bids me to seek that old life again, for reason owns the superiority of it--but how, I keep asking, am I to find "a new" (creed), or when will it find me?...I believe I am sort of a moral desperado, ready for any wild scheme, social, political or ecclesiastical, that would absorb me wholly. But meanwhile nothing offers and there is nothing left but trying, "feeling after him if haply I may find him".<sup>25</sup>

He felt that he had to struggle on a trial and error basis to find the harmony between philosophy and practical life. He never doubted, however, that some day he would find the foundations for his "old life". He wrote,

To be sure I am in terrible uncertainty just now but it cannot be that I shall never find the light of day again.<sup>36</sup>

Ward's optimism did not fail him, neither did his trial and error approach. Fumbling through a wealth of philosophy and "stunned by the break up" of his early beliefs, he was "content to drift with the people about him".<sup>37</sup> He eventually seized upon the seed of the approach that would prove to be the solution to his dilemma.

As to the relation of mind and matter, I said...that uncertainty here deprives me of a basis for the examination of Christianity. But here my unsound method exposes itself. I spoke under the feeling that I had to elaborate a philosophy before proceeding to deal with a revelation because philosophy deals with the presuppositions of a revelation; e.g., the existence of God, the possibility of a criterion of truth, etc., etc. And logically this is the true order but chronologically it is the false.<sup>38</sup>

Ward began to evolve a philosophy which recognized the needs, desires and goals of a "self". Philosophy, after all, was the creation of a

person; persons were not the creations of philosophy. At least Ward believed this to be the case. While still in Germany he wrote,

When we hush the buzzing within and listen to the two voices, the cry for Reason for philosophy and the call of Christ for admission to the heart-- mighty instincts bid us attend to the latter first.<sup>39</sup>

The testimony of personal experience, the knowledge of ourselves, became the corner stone concept for Ward's synthesis.

Reason, rationality, logic were not the prime concepts around which a cosmology should be constructed. All of these were preceded by *someone* who reasoned, someone who acted. Frank Turner commented,

Ward believed that action preceded understanding, that emotion preceded reason, and that instinct stood prior to intellection...Ward sought the roots of human existence from whence cognitive reason emerged.<sup>40</sup>

Cognition emerged from the "self". Mind was active before reason and man evolved "reason" only to preserve the self.

Life is made up of impulses; self-maintenance is its main endeavour and knowledge is obtained only as fast and as far as this paramount interest is concerned.<sup>41</sup>

Man could not be understood, then, from a perspective which assumed that man was always rational. Man struggled into being a creature of reason.

Ward's emphasis on the struggles of man's inner nature led to a philosophy which proceeded to understand the "outside" world in the terms of the "inside" world. The macrocosm was interpreted in the light of the microcosm.

Is it not possible so to connect knowledge with knowledge without a break as at last to see in the Macrocosm such a resemblance to the Microcosm that it shall be recognized as the expression of Mind, whose image we bear.<sup>42</sup>



Ward's temptation to accept materialism was thwarted by his new synthesis. Materialism was man's way of talking about the world--a fiction used to bridge the ambiguity presented by the objective events in reality.

The concept of pure passivity or inertia is a convenient analytical fiction in physics, but we find no such reality in concrete experience.<sup>43</sup>

The environment did not determine man's nature but provided only the field for the realization of one's active nature. The confrontation of the "not self" with the "self", the presentation of objects to subjects, witnessed to the fact that mind was active.

In a later work Ward used this reasoning to construct his criticisms of Naturalism. Assuming that knowledge proceeded from the microcosm to the macrocosm, Ward defended the "truth" that the activity of the organism could not be reduced to being epiphenomena of matter.

In constructing his defense Ward proceeded by establishing that objects were not active; at least not active in any sense which resembled the volitional activity of the subject. He pointed out that although physicists used terms such as "activity" in their descriptions of objects, they never implied that this activity was anything like subjective activity; nor was activity considered an inherent property of the object. Ward, in support of this argument, stated,

The whole course of things is one effect, one process...So we might say of a body moving uniformly in a straight line, that it must at one time or another have been set in motion from without, but no one can tell how long ago; at the present time, however, it is under the action of no force. Though its position in space be regarded as changing

continuously, there is no new action, no fresh interference. And so from the standpoint of the mechanical theory we are told to regard the world. Since it was first set a-going, this too has been free from the action of external forces and has received no accession of energy. Inert as a whole, and inert in every part, there is nowhere either choice or striving.<sup>44</sup>

If there existed no activity, choice or striving, in nature..."how... do we come to be talking of activity at all?"<sup>45</sup> Ward's query suggested other questions: how did the idea of activity ever seat itself in our commonsense understandings of our experience? How can an epiphenomenon possess a property not present in the phenomenon? Ward suggested that,

If there were such a thing (activity) on the physical side, then possibly we could understand the assertion that on the psychical side it was non-existent.<sup>45</sup>

Ward strengthened this protest by using an example from astronomy,

When it was a question whether the sun or the earth was to be regarded as fixed, it was plain that one or the other moved; but would it ever have been maintained that the motion of one of them was illusionary, if both had been still?<sup>46</sup>

Ward summed up his argument by saying,

Paradoxical though it may seem, yet even the illusion of activity and spontaneity is certain evidence that activity and spontaneity somehow really exist; and since by common consent they are not found in the physical world, they must be in the psychical.<sup>47</sup>

The analogical reasoning Ward used to defend the truth of the subject's activity convinced him of the truth of human freedom. Both of these ideals, human activity and human freedom, were testified to by Ward's own personal encounters. The most vital struggles in his own life were his mental struggles. Confronted by materialism he was

challenged to find the "truth" so as to put to rest his inner anguish. This inner anguish was reduced only by his determination to hold on to the "old ways" and to establish them on a "new" creed, a broader philosophy.

Ward's philosophy that knowledge of the world proceeded from the inner realm to the outer realm was also witnessed to by his personal experience. Just as he believed that man struggled to become a creature of reason, so too had Ward struggled to become a man of reason. He lacked foundations for his actions so he struggled to secure for them a foundation based on reason. Ward's belief that the inner state largely determined our perceptions of the outer world was testified to by his own experience as a minister.

As I have already remarked, Ward accepted his call to the ministry with some hesitation and under a sense of a commitment to his family's interests. Ward entered the ministry believing that his ideas were too liberal and that he would be greeted only with opposition. Any criticism from his congregation was taken as opposition to himself. He felt that he was alone, even hated by his congregation.

I am a minister among strangers, and not perhaps  
strangers merely but suspects too in many cases. <sup>48</sup>

But not all members were suspects and most supported Ward. The congregation after all had refused to accept his resignation and some were so committed to his leadership that they would rather give up the building of the new Chapel than lose their pastor. In the wake of Ward's departure, some members of the congregation gathered together and made him a generous gift. Ward was wrong in his belief that his

congregation opposed him. He came to recognize this but he had already committed his future to the pursuit of truth at the University. He wrote to Wolstenholme,

Such an expression of good will seems to lay hold of me just when it is most painful and most dangerous to be alone. But I am deeply thankful for it. To feel that so many of the people here think me worthy of their esteem will help me to maintain moral equilibrium and save me perhaps alike from the sources and the extravagance of many incipient heretics...One does not know what a privilege and what a blessing it is to work for others till one is suddenly laid aside from it.<sup>49</sup>

This letter written in 1872 was so different from his letters written just a few months earlier that it is difficult to believe that it was authored by the same hand. His earlier letters were shadowed by statements that: "the loneliness and disappointment...is almost more than I can bear" or that "Incomparably the most wretched men on Earth now are Christian Ministers".<sup>50</sup> Ward came to realize that although his paranoia was not completely unjustified, he had unduly distorted his own perception of the people in his congregation by his own misguided prejudices.

Many of Ward's friends and his family were distressed that he chose to leave the ministry. One friend wrote,

What is to become of the churches if everybody who has a God-given insight into the truth, and what is more a rare and precious knowledge of his own ignorance, is going to resign.<sup>51</sup>

But his friends need not to have worried. Ward shared their concerns for the future of Christianity. He cautioned his friend that,

Who are to be the initiators of this better state of things if those who see the effete-ness of the old retire because their opinions no longer square

with modes of thought they have outgrown?...if you who can at least handle those difficulties turn tail at the sight of them, who is to guide the untrained and illiterate when these very difficulties are urged upon them as signals that Christianity is no more and the era of Religion of the Future is to begin?<sup>52</sup>

Ward believed that the one hope for religion "was by noble living and fearless thinking to establish it on a foundation that mere sceptics could never shake".<sup>53</sup>

With this ambition Ward entered upon a career as a scholar. He developed the philosophy which he had learned from Lotze. Knowledge proceeded from the inner realm to the outer realm. Ward's intentions to develop this philosophy were stated clearly in a letter to his friend Wolstenholme,

As to my speculations, either theological or philosophical,...I think I can best tell you where I am by comparing myself to an oyster. Time was when I roved at large, a vagrant in the ocean of knowledge. Now my tentacles are atrophied and I lie at the bottom like a stone, conscious of gravitation, and able only to deal with such facts as connect themselves with my habitat. Perhaps my most ambitious dream now is to be able to arrange and concatenate these into something like a system...As might be expected too, now that I am at leisure with myself, *I am become more distinctly conscious of the need of knowing this self better, before I can better know other things. From the little to the big the order must be.* (my emphasis)<sup>54</sup>

Ward had decided on his approach and he remained throughout his long career loyal to it. He would argue that,

...reason is related to...spiritual nature as intellect is to sense, and therefore our spiritual experience must always be in advance of our rationale of the same, while the probability is that as the world of sense is more than we can intellectually

comprehend though we are continually experiencing it, so might it be with our spiritual life--faith being thus paralleled with common sense in a common opposition to philosophy.<sup>55</sup>

Ward expanded this argument to form one important dimension of his philosophy of science: that science can never, in principle, be certain as to the truth of its theories.

...this being so, theory must wait on fact, the speculation of reason on the facts of spiritual life: that in other words the conclusions of reason can only be hypothetical, since however truly we have reasoned, it cannot be surely known that we have other than partial premises, and certain necessary truths, as they may some day be called, are missing.<sup>56</sup>

Science therefore was an unsuitable basis for a world view though it was a suitable approach to understanding some of the events which occurred in the world. The basis for a cosmology rested in the realms of the unseen; the only avenue of approach resting on a spiritualistic philosophy, so Ward would have us believe.

Ward contended that nothing could be known for certain except that the "self" experiences that which is "not self". Man must continually struggle and is sustained by "faith in light to come". So too had Ward struggled with his own religious doubts, sustained only by his faith that "...it cannot be that I shall never find the light of day again".<sup>57</sup>

Ward found his light. The God whose absence rendered Spencer's evolutionary changes as nondirectional and logically nonprogressive breathed both direction and progress into Ward's pluralism. Man's struggles would culminate in his achieving light over darkness for God

has always had hold of the torch.

### III

This mixture of Ward's personal philosophy and his personal experiences as revealed in his "Memoir" show the exchange between a person's life and ideas. Ward knew that the motivation for his pursuit after knowledge grew out of the moral unrest, the mental struggles, of his inner self. He constructed a vision that rested on the belief that the activity of the self preceded reason. He also knew that his inner state affected his perceptions of the outer world. Accordingly he believed that our understanding of the objective world was based on analogies from our inner experience. Just as Ward's own freedom was realized through his confrontation with German materialism, so too was Man's freedom realized through a confrontation with the objective world. Ward's Theism grew out of his "faith in light to come"; he also believed that knowledge proceeded on a continuum of uncertainty. Just as Ward lived a "rigorously moral life" because it "worked well", so too did humanity proceed by self-preservation and not by the reasoning of philosophy.

Ward's psychology set about to describe the inner realm, as it was from these activities that the outer world was organized. A science of psychology was important to Ward's philosophical approach. He felt he had to become better acquainted with the "self" before he could construct a philosophy of the objective realm. Accordingly, Ward's career followed this plan.

Up until 1894 most of Ward's efforts were directed towards the

development of a science of psychology. While studying physiology under Foster and Ludwig he was only trying to understand "the fringes of psychology". In 1878 he urged Cambridge to establish a laboratory for the study of experimental psychology. His request was denied. His Encyclopedia Britannica article which appeared in 1886 was the culmination of his psychological ideas. He argued his case for psychology from a standpoint he termed "individualistic".

Establishing a science of psychology, a science of inner experience, enabled Ward to proceed in his construction of an entire world view. Explanations and descriptions of the outer realm had to wait upon a more exacting understanding of the inner realm. That some historians have regarded Ward's endeavours as being split between psychological and philosophical interests serves only to expose the short sightedness of the methodologies they utilize in constructing their histories of psychology.<sup>57</sup>

An appropriate summary of the intentions of Ward's psychology and philosophy has been provided by his own hand,

If we cannot have omniscience then, what we want is a philosophy that shall justify faith--justify it in the only way in which it can be justified by giving it room. So far, at least, one must agree with Kant in the famous passage in the preface to his first Critique ending with the words: "I must remove knowledge in order to get room for faith".<sup>58</sup>

Faith was all that Ward had. Faith that he would find God and his own life again. Faith was the backbone of Ward's optimism and, he thought, the backbone of the optimism of humanity--striving after the hope of better things to come.



## Notes:

A Philosopher of Faith: The  
Biographical-Intellectual Background

<sup>1</sup>I must make one cautionary note before proceeding. As I have not been able to gain access to Ward's personal letters, and as Ward did not leave us with an autobiography, I have based this chapter largely on a secondary source: Olwen Ward Campbell's memoir of her father (printed in Essays in Philosophy by J. Ward, edited by W. R. Sorley and G. F. Stout, Cambridge University Press, 1927.). Another author, then, has chosen from Ward's letters those segments which revealed to her his most striking characteristics. I have chosen my material from this array. The errors emanating from such a procedure are, without doubt, many. The severity of these errors in distorting Ward's biography are difficult to judge, however, until a full biography has been compiled on Ward from primary source materials.

<sup>2</sup>W. R. Sorley, "James Ward, 1843-1925", British Academy Proceedings, vol. 12 (1926-1927), 306-316, pg. 308.

<sup>3</sup>For example H. Gruber in Darwin on Man (E. P. Dutton & Co.: New York, 1974) brings out the fact that Darwin had an intense fear of persecution and as such held back the publication of his ideas for twenty years. See this discussion on pages 35-45. Frank Turner in Between Science and Religion (New Haven, 1974) argued that Romanes' life was marked by a teetering of feelings for religion and a belief in science. See his chapter "George John Romanes: From Faith to Faith", pages 134-163. G. H. Lewes had a life which saw him give up medicine for a career in literary journalism. Later he again shifted his interests and sought after the certainties of science so as to construct an entire cosmology based on first principles. See George Henry Lewes: A Victorian Mind by Hock Guan Tjoa (Harvard University Press: 1977), pages 8-12.

<sup>4</sup>In volume I of Owen Chadwick's book The Victorian Church (Adam & Charles Black: London, 1966) he commented that John Campbell, the editor of two newspapers for the Congregationalist's union, added a third printed organ, *The British Banner*, which was used for "grand noises". Campbell aggravated many of the Congregationalists because he "greatly disliked the Evangelical Alliance, which most Congregationalists loved." (pg. 404). For a complete discussion of the Congregationalist's Union see volume I, pages 440-455.

<sup>5</sup>To give the reader an impression of the activities of the evangelicals I shall quote a passage from Chadwick's The Victorian Church, volume I (op. cit. in note 4): "In slums like Whitechapel or Bethnal Green, in

fashionable watering-places like Brighton and Bath, in remote country parishes, they could be found foremost in every scheme of charity, supporting church extension at home, distributing tracts and coals and blankets, stirring the people to support foreign missions, summoning the elect to their Bibles and their prayers. 'It is better', said Edward Bickersteth, 'to wear out than to rust out'...They instituted more frequent communion, increased the number of services, promoted new standards of reverence." (pg. 443).

<sup>6</sup>Olwen Ward Campbell, "Memoir" (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 17. Here after I shall refer to this work as "Memoir".

<sup>7</sup>Dorner was immersed in speculative theology (see J. T. Merz, A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century, Peter Smith, 1976, pg. 175, vol. iii.). This was a school of theology which attempted to establish reasoned philosophical creeds in the hope that these would provide a foundation for the "deeper sense and meaning of the teachings contained in the New as well as the Old Testaments..." (Merz, vol. iii, pg. 166.).

<sup>8</sup>I say this because he was dismayed by the growing militarism in Germany which he attributed to a loss of Christian belief ("Memoir", pg. 31). Yet his mind was attracted to materialism at least for a short time for he wrote to a friend in 1869-1870 that "matter seems to make at times the best claim to be all." (pg. 25, "Memoir").

<sup>9</sup>"Memoir", pg. 68.

<sup>10</sup>G. H. Lewes more than once travelled to France and he and George Elliot spent some time in Germany. Mill journeyed the Continent as did Carlyle. Also some of Ward's friends went to Germany to better prepare themselves for the ministry (see pg. 20, "Memoir").

<sup>11</sup>In a letter to his friend Ward expressed his parents' reaction to his suggestion that he might not enter the ministry but instead return to Germany to further his studies: "She cried when I told her it was possible I should return to Germany:" she said, "You are 27 now and I looked years and years hoping to see you something and now I never shall." (pg. 35, "Memoir"). This reaction from his mother would have bothered Ward as he commented later in his life that "It is characteristic of the two that in her forehead the deepest wrinkles are perpendicular, and in...father's horizontal: he has made the trouble and she has felt it." (pg. 4, "Memoir"). Ward did not want to heap more frustration on his mother. Also his family sacrificed financially so that he could pursue his education as a minister. He was regarded by all of them..." as their pride and glory, and his prospective ministry as their dearest hope." (pg. 20, "Memoir").

<sup>12</sup>"Memoir", pg. 32.

<sup>13</sup>"Memoir", pg. 37.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pg. 57.

<sup>15</sup>Olwen Ward Campbell commented that, "Lotze combined the interests-scientific, philosophical, and religious-which were struggling in Ward's mind and which dominated his career. He emphasised the exact methods of science and defended their applications to phenomena of all kinds: he stood for mechanism as against the methods of the Hegelian idealists. At the same time he maintained that mechanism did not explain reality: reality could not be understood without taking into account aesthetical and moral values. Hence the fundamental characteristic of his thought appealed to Ward who was equally alive to the demands of exact science and to the claims of moral and religious values." (pg. 30). Based on my own reading of Lotze's work I have noted the similarities of thought between Lotze and Ward. Ward's interpretation of the outer world of things in terms of the 'inner' realm has a striking similarity to Lotze's interpretation of the world of 'things' through 'values' and 'worths'. Merz in A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century (op. cit. in note 7) discussed this dimension of Lotze's thought on pg. 107, vol. iv, and pg. 207, vol. iv.

<sup>16</sup>Germany at this time was passing through an intellectual onslaught directed by the materialistic thinkers of the day. The materialist appeal to accept that "no other forces than common physical chemical ones are active in the organism" was set in motion by Helmholtz, Du Bois-Reymond, Ernst Brucke and Carl Ludwig. Their torch was picked up by Carl Vogt, Ludwig Buchner and Ernst Haeckel. All three of these were scientists and all three were public figures who promoted their materialist ideas to the masses. For some brief discussions of these figures and their materialist propaganda see J. T. Merz, A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century (op. cit. in note 7), vol. II, pg. 323, Owen Chadwick, The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge University Press, 1975), pg's 169-182.

<sup>17</sup>"Memoir", pg. 10.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pg. 10.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pg. 12.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pg. 12.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pg. 27-28.

<sup>22</sup>J. T. Merz, A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century (op. cit. in note 7), pg. 166-167, vol. iv.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pg. 167.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pg. 167.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pg. 167.

<sup>26</sup>The higher criticism which developed in Germany focused on the determination of authorship and dates of various scriptures. At times these facts were at variance with traditional beliefs. This worked to challenge the belief that the Scriptures were verbally inspired. Randall commented, "Differences in style, contradictory accounts of the same event, conflicting commandments purporting to come from God, made the older Protestant view that every word and every point was divinely inspired and literally true, exceedingly difficult to reconcile with faith in the wisdom and rationality of God." (The Making of the Modern Mind, Columbia University Press, 1926, pg. 552). The 'higher criticism', then, eroded away the use of Scripture as a firm basis, or the only basis, for theology. German theologians in the nineteenth century struggled to find a basis for their theologies--speculative theology was an example of such an effort.

<sup>27</sup>Olwen Ward Campbell commented, "More and more clearly he felt that if Christianity was to survive it must be through a tremendous broadening of the Churches, and that far more able minds must take up its defense." (pg. 28, "Memoir").

<sup>28</sup>In his article titled "Immanuel Kant" (printed in A Study of Kant by J. Ward, Cambridge University Press, 1922) he wrote, "As to Kant's main purpose--this, it is stated, was to refute Hume and establish the truth of the Christian religion--these being the further grounds for the book's popularity..." (pg. 5-6).

<sup>29</sup>"Memoir", pg. 25.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pg. 63.

<sup>31</sup>James Ward, "Naturalism", Encyclopaedia Britannica (11<sup>th</sup> edition), pg. 88.

<sup>32</sup>"Memoir", pg. 26.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pg. 30.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pg. 62-63.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pg. 62-63.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pg. 38.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pg. 64.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pg. 25-26.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pg. 25-26.

<sup>40</sup>Frank Turner, Between Science and Religion (op. cit. in note 3), pg. 215.

<sup>41</sup>James Ward, "Faith and Science", *Papers read before the Synthetic Society, 1896-1908*, pg. 365-366, quoted from F. Turner Between Science and Religion, pg. 223.

<sup>42</sup>"Memoir", pg. 37.

<sup>43</sup>James Ward, "The Present Problems of General Psychology" in Congress of Arts and Science edited by Howard J. Rogers (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1906), vol. 5 (or 8), pg. 640.

<sup>44</sup>James Ward, Naturalism and Agnosticism (London: Adam and Charles Black, second edition, 1903), volume II, pg. 49.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pg. 48.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., pg. 48-49.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pg. 49.

<sup>48</sup>"Memoir", pg. 43.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., pg. 45.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., pg. 44, pg. 43.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pg. 45.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pg. 29.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pg. 28-29.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pg. 57.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., pg. 57-58.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pg. 58.

<sup>57</sup>"Memoir," pg 38.

<sup>58</sup>I have in mind J. A. Cardano who in his article "The Victorian Psychologists: A biographical approach", Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences, 1, (1965), pg. 166, referred to Ward's psychology as being appropriately nineteenth century because it wasn't until the twentieth century that he became a philosopher. Cardano implied that Ward was a psychologist turned philosopher. Ward was always a philosopher; he used his psychology as a means to an end.

<sup>59</sup>James Ward, "The Progress of Philosophy" in Essays in Philosophy by James Ward, edited by W. R. Sorley and G. F. Stout (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 139-140.

CHAPTER III  
THE BIOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIAL EXPRESSIONS  
OF WARD'S THEORY OF VOLITION

Psychology then we define as the science of individual experience--understanding by experience not merely, not primarily, cognition, but also, *and above all*, conative activity...<sup>1</sup> (my emphasis)

Conation is a term seldom used today. It refers to an individual's tendency to act, "a conscious striving".<sup>2</sup> Ward used the word interchangeably with volition; a usage English and English acknowledge as appropriate.<sup>3</sup> It was around this concept of conation that Ward arranged his psychology. Volition was, as indicated in the above quote, central to Ward's understanding of psychology.

The activity of the self, the striving self, was so much a part of Ward's understanding of his own life that it is not surprising that it constituted a central place in his conception of psychology. Ward's philosophical and personal intentions had to wait upon the development of a scientific psychology. His psychology in turn had to wait upon a refinement of his understanding of human volition. Ward's developmental theory of volition was both a proclamation of the powers of human agency and a calculated attack on Naturalism.

Ward's attack on Naturalism, however, should not be construed to mean that he blindly accepted the tenets of Spiritualism. He did defend the causal powers of "self" (an unseen entity) and in this defense he revealed his commitment to the ideals of Spiritualism. He

did not, however, accept without qualification the psychological tradition which had become associated with Spiritualism. The lessons he learned at the hands of the German materialists prevented any uncritical allegiances on his part.

## II

In the first chapter the debate between Spiritualism and Naturalism was outlined. As this debate came to focus on relevant social issues of the day, psychological concepts and theories of Mind were employed by both parties. This concentration on psychological issues was picked up and given voice to by two psychological traditions. Faculty psychology supported the concerns of Spiritualism while the associationist tradition took up the mantle of Naturalism.

The faculty theorists argued that a science of psychology must center on the activity of the mind. These psychologists assumed that it was through the operations of this mental activity that all knowledge was arrived at. The knowledge (gained through introspection on our own mental activities) was the only knowledge we knew directly and with certainty; all other knowledge was mediated by this knowledge. Psychology, on this viewpoint, studied individual mental activities through introspective analysis.

Associationism opposed the idealism of these subjective psychologists. It argued that mental activity was an illusion, the result of lawfully determined interactions of objective elements.<sup>5</sup> They protested that the subjective operations of the mind were unobservable and, because of their spiritual nature, could at best attain only hypothetical status. Activity of the mind, if it in fact existed, was



considered by the associationists to be beyond the scope of science. Science dealt only with that which was observable. Psychology in this viewpoint utilized a methodology from the natural sciences where all psychological events were treated as objects. The "inner" dimensions of psychical life became either epiphenomena of physical associations or they were considered to be events beyond the scope of a science of psychology.

James Ward was for all intents and purposes a faculty psychologist. Yet he was not entirely accepting of this tradition.

The old psychologies, with their legion of faculties, were no doubt unscientific, just as were the older physics with their legion of forces or inherent powers. But modern physicists have not abandoned the older concept of "forces" entirely: they have merely substituted in their stead the exacter concept of energy. Modern psychologists, however, have not been equally guarded; for they have rejected the concept of subjective activity altogether.<sup>6</sup>

Ward contended that faculty psychology was not wrong in its arguing for the activity of the subject; it was merely unclear as to just what was to be included in the subject's activity. He believed that this tradition "failed to distinguish adequately between the subject as active and the objects of its activity".<sup>7</sup> Ward developed his psychology so as to avoid this confusion without accepting the associationist's (the "modern psychologist's") alternative to reject the idea of the subject's activity. In so doing Ward developed a more exacting concept of activity. It was in the process of this refinement that Ward's ideas on volition were detailed.

## III

Ward's refinement of the concept of the subject's activity focused on the idea of conation, the individual's striving after life. Man reacted to the objective world only to preserve the self. Ward understood human volitions to be neither an extension of reflex actions nor actions which could be placed on a continuum which ran from the "most automatic" to the "least automatic". Volitions did not surface because physiological processes became too complex to work automatically. Reactions of the organism to the environment were not first simple reflexes which slowly evolved into volitions. Ward understood man to be involved in a constant struggle with the environment. The subject, confronted by objects, struggled to preserve itself. In so doing, man created reflexes to enhance the preservation of self and developed reasoning only as a tool with which one could make choices which functioned to enhance individual survival. Reason did not precede volition, conation preceded cognition. All human actions were self preserving and as such all actions were goal directed.

Following in the tradition of Darwin, and countless other Victorians, Ward felt that to understand things as they were in the present, one had to appreciate how they had developed through their past.<sup>8</sup> Ward began to refine the concept of subjective activity through an evolutionary approach.

Ward's theory of volition had all the markings of a Victorian evolutionary system. He inclined in his theory of volition to discussions of concepts such as "struggle", "selection" and "survival of the fittest".

Further, all of these discussions were couched in an assumption of progress. At first glance it appears that Ward had all the ingredients for the making of a theory which would embrace the principles of Naturalism. Yet these concepts were transformed by Ward such that they took on nuances of meaning which both guarded his commitment to Spiritualism and tacitly attacked the dominant scientific approach.

Ward began discussion of his ideas on volition by establishing the primordial context from which conation emerged. Ward "began at the beginning" though he realized the theoretical limitations of such a task.<sup>9</sup>

Ward speculated that in the beginning all that existed were subjects and objects. Individual selves struggled for survival within a mass of undifferentiated objects. Ward identified his concept of "subject" with Kant's ideal of the "pure ego" or "pure self".<sup>10</sup> This pure self could not be described as being either body or soul. It was not known except through its effects on the environment and it came to know of itself in the same manner. In some ways Ward's concept of the pure self paralleled the idea of force as it was used in physics. Forces were neither material nor spiritual (soul) bodies but were known through their effects on objects.

Ward's conception of the object world was also original to the Victorian mind.<sup>11</sup> He argued that a world of objects existed but they existed as one continuous and undifferentiated mass. He speculated that the outer world existed as a continuum of objects which he termed "objective continuum" or the "*totum objectivum*".<sup>12</sup> There were

no lines to distinguish individual parts within this continuum; there were no discrete elements in the objective world. The lines of differentiation which came to exist, the elements which emerged from the *totum objectivum*, were owing to subjective selection. The moment we become aware of a discrete object in our consciousness is the moment that differentiation of the *totum objectivum* has occurred.

The subject came to know the objective world through its own activity. The objective continuum was differentiated into discrete objects-presentations-which were associated to other already differentiated presentations. Presentations were "psychical objects" not "physical objects".<sup>13</sup> The roots of this distinction rested on Ward's belief that physical objects existed only in the continuous forms of the *totum objectivum*. Once an object had acquired a distinctness it had been differentiated from this continuum and therefore existed as an element within someone's consciousness as a "psychical object".

Physical objects gained an identity of individuality because individuals imposed boundaries of existence onto aspects of the *totum objectivum*; a subject stooks and bails physical reality like a farmer stooks and bails a field of hay. These imposed boundaries, however, were not fabrications of the mind but attributes selected from the continuous stream of the outer world. Although presentations owed their existence to the activity of a subject, they were not the creations of a subject's mind. The subject only selected, it did not create, the boundaries which gave objects their individual status. From the *totum objectivum* a presentational continuum was constructed where

presentations were associated in a continuous stream. This continuous stream of presentations was the only world man knew directly.

One thing to keep in mind when examining Ward's "presentational world" is that presentations always exist for someone. Discrete objects cannot exist independently of subjects. Ward stated,

We may...say that presentations are objects, and that the relation of objects to subjects--that whereby one is object and the other subject--is presentation. It is because *only objects sustain this relation* that we may safely speak of them as presentations.<sup>14</sup>

Presentations were not the fabrication of an active mind but a slice of reality. This slice of reality, however, was subjectively initiated. The association of these slices into a continuous stream of presentations constituted man's notion of the outside world.

Ward's understanding of the "presentational world" fixed his approach for understanding the evolution of human actions. In Ward's primordial world, human actions evolved out of a mass of undifferentiated movements which existed in a "motor continuum". Certain movements were differentiated from a continuum because they served the individual's interests to survive. Ward commented,

Out of the irregular, seemingly aimless, movements that indirectly relieve pain some one may chance to remove the cause of it altogether. Upon this movement, the last of a tentative series, attention, released from the pain, is concentrated; and in this way evil and the remedy become so far connected that, when the painful situation recurs, the many diffused movements become less, and the more purposive movements were pronounced.<sup>15</sup>

The subject selected from this mass of "irregular" and "seemingly aimless" movements only those which enhanced survival. The law of self-

preservation was the only law which governed the activity of the self.

The law of self-preservation was understood by Ward to mean that "...whatever is pleasurable tends to further and perfect life, whatever is painful to disturb or destroy it".<sup>16</sup> This was the only law which governed the activity of the self. As such the self's survival was owing neither to the organism's ability to react to the environment through a set of prewired organic links known as reflexes nor to the probabilities offered by natural selection. Rather, the subject, self or individual survived because it made choices to avoid pain and to enhance pleasure.

The subject's choice of movements enhanced its chances of survival. Movements enabled the subject to alter its environment to secure the ends which served its instincts for survival. As such, motor presentations had a relationship with the subject not shared by other types of presentations. This difference rested "ultimately on the fact that movements have, and sensations have not, a subjective initiative".<sup>17</sup> Ward supported this statement with anecdotal empirical evidence:

...psychologists describe under the head of fascination, imitation, hypnotism etc., that the mere concentration of attention upon a movement is often enough to bring the movement to pass.<sup>18</sup>

Because of this special relationship between the subject and motor presentations, a relationship Ward did not develop any further in his theory of volition, the subject came to identify himself/herself with the physical body. The self's proclaimed ownership of the body constituted one part of that which Ward termed the "empirical self".<sup>19</sup>

The fact that the self proclaimed ownership of a body reveals the instrumentalism which marked Ward's psychology and exposes, in addition, his alliance with Spiritualism. Ward understood the self to use the body as a tool to achieve its own ends. Any improvements in the physical body which rendered movements more effective in altering the environment enhanced the organism's survival potential. It was from this standpoint that Ward included Darwin's concept of natural selection in his evolutionary theory of human development.

Natural selection functioned to secure the survival of a species by providing a species with a more refined physical structure. Subjective selection enhanced the individual's survival potential through choices of movements (actions) which enhanced pleasure and averted pain. Ward believed that both forms of selection worked together. A species with a more refined physical structure could more effectively manipulate the physical environment to maximize pleasure, avoid pain and thereby ensure its continued existence. Once an organism had been physically refined, however, natural selection played a small part in the quest for self preservation. Ward commented,

Both factors (natural and subjective selection), in reality operate at once, and it would be hard to fix a limit to either; though natural selection seems to lose in comparative importance as we advance towards the higher stages of life.<sup>20</sup>

Like A. R. Wallace, Ward believed that natural selection could not account for human survival. As the organism became structurally more refined, survival became more dependent on the volitional processes of the subject.

## IV

Ward regarded his idea of subjective selection to be important enough to require a more detailed analysis. In this analysis he expressed the activity of the subject in terms of an interplay between three factors: presentations, attention and feelings. It was volition, functioning according to the law of self-conservation, that integrated these three terms to a point where they reflected a theoretical unity. This unity Ward described as human experience.

Ward's concept of the *totum objectivum* and the differentiation of this continuum into presentations provided him with his model for understanding attention. He commented,

...we must assume there is always some degree of continuous attention to the presentation-continuum as a whole. Acts of attention are changes in the distribution of this attention just as presentations are changes in the differentiation of the continuum.<sup>21</sup>

A single act of attention was a redistribution of attention from one object (presentation) to another.<sup>22</sup> This redistribution of attention was either objectively diverted or subjectively initiated.<sup>23</sup>

Objectively diverted attention occurred when the degree of concentrated attention was directly proportional to the intensity of the presentation.

To be *noticed* or specially attended to, an impression-when not expected-must then...have more intensity the more attention is concentrated elsewhere...<sup>24</sup>

That is, the object "catches" the subject's attention. Objectively diverted acts of attention, then, were caused largely by external conditions. Ward described this form of attention as "receptive attention".<sup>25</sup>



Subjectively initiated attention occurred when the subject, through volition, willfully concentrated attention to achieve some goal or end. That is, attention was not objectively diverted by the conditions of the presentational continuum, but was focused by the subject onto a particular presentation. "Reactive attention" was the term Ward applied to describe this form of attention.

Receptive and reactive attention led to states of mind Ward described as "sensory or receptive attitudes" and "motor or active attitudes".<sup>26</sup> The former attitude followed from receptive attention and motor attitudes followed from reactive attention. All actions which involved movements were caused by the subject's concentration of attention on motor presentations which achieved a desired end.

The dichotomy between receptive and reactive forms of attention implied that not all acts are volitional. Ward was hesitant to allow non-volitional gaps into his psychology. He feared that these gaps might allow a footing where Naturalism could substitute in the place of these gaps a physical mechanism. To avert such a problem Ward clarified his concept of receptive attention by talking about man as being more or less active. He commented,

Attention...will cover part of what is meant by consciousness, so much of it, that is, as answers to being mentally active, active enough at least to "receive impressions".<sup>27</sup>

Ward filled the non-volitional void in his psychology by ascribing activity to the receptive state. Passivity, understood as a mindless receptacle into which impressions were poured, was a concept which had

no place in Ward's psychology. Passivity implied less activity, not non-activity on the part of the subject.<sup>28</sup> The individual chooses to receive impressions.

The choices made by individuals were governed by one law: the law of self conservation. Feelings were the cues as to which actions benefited the organism and which actions hindered its survival. Painful actions, or actions which caused environmental changes which were painful, cued the subject to the impending destruction of the self. Pleasurable actions, or actions which maintained pleasurable presentations, were cues to the individual's survival. As feelings cued the subject to perform the appropriate actions, Ward considered feelings to be the "springboard for all actions".

As a barometer for the subject's survival, feelings were caused states.

The simplest form of life, therefore, involves not only a subjective feeling, but a subject having qualitatively distinguishable objective presentations which are the causes of its feelings.<sup>29</sup>

The subject acted upon its feelings either to maintain in consciousness those presentations which were pleasurable or to remove from consciousness those presentations which were painful.

Ward joined together these three concepts, presentations, attention and feeling to form a unified structure for human experience. Feelings cued the subject as to which directions attention should be focused. The subject focused attention on presentations which were pleasurable and drafted attention from painful presentations. This draft in

attention created a concentration of attention in another area of the presentational continuum, further differentiating this continuum. This process of differentiation occurs until the subject finds a presentation, usually motor, which will remove the painful presentation. The subject acts on this trial and error basis until it secures movements appropriate for survival. In this way humanity has adapted all of its behaviours to the environment. Ward believed that human conduct of the present age was the result of this trial and error evolution of the subject seeking self preservation. The tools which aided the subject in achieving this end were provided by feelings which cued the subject to focus attention on those presentations which aided the self's adaption to the environment.

...to whatever stage we advance, therefore, we have always in any given "state of mind" attention and feeling on the one side, and on the other a presentation of objects.<sup>30</sup>

With this tripartite approach Ward attempted to account for all that was understood by the term "human experience". He commented,

...instead of crediting the subject with an indefinite number of faculties or capacities we must seek to explain not only assimilation, differentiation, reproduction, association, etc., but all varieties of thinking and acting, by laws pertaining primarily to ideas or presentations, leaving to the subject only the one power of variously distributing that attention upon which the effective intensity of a presentation in part depends. Of this single activity, what we call activity in the narrower sense (as e.g., purposive movement and intellection) is but a special case, although a very important one.<sup>31</sup>

Purposive movements and intellection (thinking) were just expressions of man's volitional capacity--man's volitional capacity was not re-

stricted by the narrow limits provided by either "purposive movement" or human "thought".

Ward's theory of volition could not be contained within the narrow limits allowed by the traditional psychological notions of purposive movement and human intellection because volition reached beyond psychology to metaphysics. Volition was a fact of human nature. Volition was like an instinct--it was an unlearned disposition, an enduring tendency to act according to the law of self conservation. Yet volition was not like an instinct in that it could never be reduced to a physiological mechanism.

Ward's theory of volition was couched in his concept of the subject's activity. The subject had but one activity and that activity undermined all knowledge. Man's perceptions of the world were organized, built up and reorganized by man's own interests in survival. The world of objects, though ontologically separate from the subject's activity, were epistemologically inseparable from the subject's intentions. This in no way implied that Ward understood objects to be mental fictions; this would contradict his belief in the ontological reality of the objective realm. Rather objects owed their individual identity to the powers of subjective selection. Objects as discrete elements, the only objects we know, are directly tied to the subject's ability to fix boundaries of the *totum objectivum*. The fact that discrete objects existed in consciousness testified to Ward that the subject was active. He commented,

Just as little as we can identify center and circum-

ference, organism and environment, because the one implies the other; just so little can subject and object be identified, because the one implies the other. The real contradiction, then, lies not in accepting but in denying, this dual relation, one term of which is being *subject*, and the other a certain continuity of *known object*.<sup>32</sup>

It was the unfolding of Ward's volitional ideas that provided him with a basis for his attack on scientific Naturalism. Ward contended that our knowledge of the world was necessarily incomplete because the subject selects only certain dimensions from the whole of the objective realm. It was this fact that made it possible for Ward to deny the duality of subject and object. Ward's "active subject" imbued the world with a plasticity. The subject knew the world only by the boundaries that had been selected. As the subject shifted attention to different dimensions of the *totum objectivum*, the subject's perceptions of the world changed. A child's perceptions of the world were different from the adult's perceptions of the world because children and adults sliced up the objective continuum differently. The objective reality is the same for both adults and children, yet their perceptions of this reality were diverse.

Were association a purely passive process so far as the experient was concerned, it would be difficult to account for the diversities which exist in the organized experience of creatures with the same general environment; but subjective selection explains this at once.<sup>33</sup>

In view of this plasticity, Ward considered that any cosmology which treated the world as if it existed as a plenum of discrete elements (interacting lawfully one with another), failed to distinguish between

epistemology and ontology; they confused *known* objects with the world as it is.

Ward developed this criticism from an expansion of his volitional ideas. Volition was not restricted to explanations of purposive movements but was expanded to form the basis for man's entire understanding of reality. As such, man's reason, human cognition, was regarded as a hand-maiden to conation. Ward commented,

To understand intellection we must look at its actual development under the impetus of practical needs, rather than to logical ideals of what it ought to be. Like other forms of *purposive activity*, thinking is primarily undertaken as a means to an end, and especially the end of economy. It is often easier and always quicker to manipulate ideas than to manipulate real things; to the common mind the thoughtful man is one who "uses his head to save his heels".<sup>34</sup> (my emphasis)

Cognition was a process which organized ideas to enhance survival.

Ideas--or representations as Ward called them<sup>35</sup>--were given their place in experience according to their "...worth positive or negative, their goodness or badness as ends or means to life".<sup>36</sup>

Thus what is essential and effective comes to be realized and appreciated and what is accidental and inert to be discarded and fall out of sight. In this way man advances in the construction of a complete mental clue or master key to the intricacies of the world it enables him to control.<sup>37</sup>

Ward assures us that ideas are not mental fictions but mental clues; pieces from the puzzle which existed "out there". We remember and associate only those ideas which gave clues to the strategies which aspired to maintain life. All knowledge, then, served practical interests. Ward commented,

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the objects of experience are not primarily objects of knowledge, but objects of conation...<sup>38</sup>

Ward understood the self as seeking after its own security. All of the subject's actions reflected this propensity. The subject differentiated the *totum objectivum* into a presentational continuum. This continuum was further differentiated into secondary and tertiary continua which consisted "...almost wholly of facts connected with voluntary attention".<sup>39</sup> These secondary and tertiary continua were termed the "memory" and "ideational" continua. The source of all of man's ideas was the result of a volitional-intellectual process. Ward commented,

However much for purposes of exposition we may abstract, we cannot separate, intellection from volition.<sup>40</sup>

Ward, convinced of the volitional-intellectual nature of man's understanding of the world, lodged an attack on the associationists. According to Ward the associationists made the error of ignoring the subject's activity when they were attempting to account for man's perceptions of the world. Ward commented,

Presentations do not associate themselves in virtue of some inherent adhesiveness or attraction: it is not enough that they "occur together", as Bain and the rest of his school imply. They must be attended to together: it is only what subjective interest has integrated that is afterwards automatically reintegrated.<sup>41</sup>

Ideas (representations) were not associated by "some inherent adhesiveness or attraction" but because the subject associated them. Once ideas were associated they could be described by the laws of conti-

guity which held that "...presentations...occurring (a) together or (b) in close succession, tend to grow together or to cohere, in such a way that when any one recurs it tends to revive the rest as a secondary presentation..."<sup>42</sup> But ideas were NOT associated by the law of contiguity; rather they were made by the subject according to the law of self conservation.

...these psychical "quasi-mechanisms" have to be made, and the process of making them is the essential part of psychical life.<sup>43</sup>

It was the balance Ward struck between the laws of association and his interests in maintaining the subject's activity that led him to pen the criticism that associationism

...may be adequate to nine tenths of the facts, or-- better perhaps--to nine tenths of each fact, but it cannot either effectively clear itself of, or satisfactorily explain the remaining tenth.<sup>44</sup>

Because the associationists did not recognize the powers of subjective initiative, they would never be able to (in Ward's eyes) satisfactorily account for why ideas became associated. *Explanations* as to why certain ideas became associated rested, for Ward, on the principles of the unseen powers of the subject. In Ward's view the law of contiguity provided only an adequate *description* of how ideas interacted once they were associated

In a statement to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, W. B. Carpenter commented on Naturalism's pernicious tendency to mask descriptions as explanations.

When Science, passing beyond its own limits, assumes to take the place of Theology, and sets up its own



conception of the Order of *Nature* as a sufficient account of its *Cause*, it is invading a province of Thought to which it has no claim...<sup>45</sup>

Ward's own Spiritualist inclinations predisposed him to adopt this type of attitude towards associationism, the official form of "subjective naturalism".<sup>46</sup> The associationists ordered the realm of ideas according to the laws of association (the law of contiguity and the law of continuity). In so doing they regarded these laws as sufficient causal explanations of the mental order. Ward, like most Spiritualists, was not content with descriptions disguised as explanations. Ideas were associated by the subject's activity--guided by the goal of survival.

Ward understood humanity to be volitional by virtue of its nature. He organized his psychology around the concept of man's activity because man's psychological evolution rested on the principles of volition. Man could not do other than act. As such Ward believed that the subject's activity was just as natural and as self-explanatory as the inert nature of objects. Scientists did not have to outline the details of why objects were inert any more than psychologists had to detail why subjects were active. Inertness of objects and activities of subjects were so much a part of human experience that they were regarded as facts of nature.

Because Ward had such a conception of human volition, nowhere in his writings does he try to outline how volition came to exist. Man was always volitional.

Volition did not rise out of physiological complexities nor was it an elaboration of reflex actions. Both of these conceptions belonged

to Naturalists who attempted to express all phenomena in terms of physical events. They left no room for spontaneous activity. For Naturalism, volition was a violation of their view of the natural order. They in turn developed theories which tried to account for how volition came into being from the physical properties of matter. "Volitional centers" in the brain were sought after by the naturalists in the hope that volition could be accounted for in the terms of a sensory-motor paradigm. Because Naturalism had established a view of the natural order which recognized only the reality of inert objects, they believed that in the last analysis volition would be accounted for in terms of matter in motion.

On Ward's view, however, volition could not be explained away by resorting to various forms of physiological arguments. Volition was a *property* of nature not a *product* of the natural order.<sup>47</sup> Instead of basing his theory of volition on discussions of how volition originated (the form of volitional theorizing common to Naturalism) Ward discussed volition in view of how it could be refined to become a more exacting concept. As such Ward's theory of volition included discussions of two coterminus conceptions: subjective selection and human conation.

Subjective selection was expressed as the subject's ability to direct attention to differentiate the *totum objectivum* into a presentational continuum. It was this latter continuum which corresponded to the "world as it was known." Our understanding of reality, then, was owing to subjective selection because presentations owed their existence to subjective selection.

Attention on the side of the subject implies intensity on the side of the object: we might indeed almost call intensity the matter of a presentation, without which it is a nonentity.<sup>48</sup>

Knowledge of the world rested on the subject's choices--selections --from the continuous mass of the objective realm. These choices, however, were underwritten by human conation. Conation was man's striving after actions which ensured survival. The subject selected from the *totum objectivum* those presentations which increased the chances of the individual's survival. These choices, guided by conation which functioned according to the law of self conservation, were not certain of success. It was through trial and error that the subject built up an associated network of actions which enhanced the preservation of life. The organism progressed to a point where the subject could choose one movement which would alleviate pain, and, progressing further, the organism reached the point where it could choose preventative movements.

After a time, therefore, the occurrence of some warning sensation revives the image of the harm that has previously followed in its wake, and a movement... occurs in time to avert the impending ill.<sup>49</sup>

It was through volition, meaning by this subjective selection guided by conation, that man was able to struggle against his/her environment, building up behaviours, associating ideas and remembering ways of life that enhanced pleasure and averted pain.

## VI

Ward's theory of volition was a theoretical fabric woven together by both personal and social interests. As such his theory was both a

proclamation of human agency and a calculated attack on Naturalism. His theory was Spiritualistic, offering to humanity freedom and the causal power to effect changes in the physical world. Further, Ward's theory of volition was conceived of in such a way that it enabled him both to maintain a social philosophy based on assumptions of free will and to base this social philosophy on a conception of science. Ward had personal interests in reestablishing faith in God and in providing a foundation for Christianity which "mere skeptics could not shake". Yet, his personal tensions grew as he came to know more about science and philosophy; the despair he felt was framed as a question, "how is a disciple of modern thought to be religious?" Ward's volitional ideas were sharpened by the intellectual frustrations he faced in these struggles. The disillusionment he experienced when his "practical living" was no longer anchored to his personal philosophy did not escape expression in his theoretical efforts. Each condition, social and personal, entered into his theory of volition to give it form, direction, focus and purpose.

The controversial context within which Ward developed his psychology provided him with a wide range of conflicting ideas. Ward, for the most part, patterned his psychology on Spiritualist notions of human freedom. This is not to imply, however, that he rejected all that Naturalism had to offer. Ward borrowed from associationism what could be tempered to his own Spiritualist ambitions. For instance he borrowed from Bain the idea that volition was responsible for the direction of attention. Where Ward and Bain differed rested with their notions of how ideas

were associated. Ward argued that volition not only directed attention to ideas but brought ideas into relationships one with another. The subject had the freedom and the power to associate ideas. Bain on the other hand, was content to leave the association of ideas to the laws of contiguity and to inherent properties of adhesion and attraction. Ward expanded the notion of volition beyond Bain's concept of volition which was limited to directing attention to a network of ideas which were already associated by laws external to the subject. It was Ward's broadening of the subject's activity that motivated Bain to criticize that Ward had a "tendency to go too far."<sup>50</sup>

Through volition each individual selected, organized and reorganized his/her reality. Individuals associated ideas by directing attention to parts of the presentation continuum. No one person could ever know the objective world in its continuous stream as man selected boundaries and attributed to objects an individuality. As man perceived himself/herself as an individual, so too did he/she organize reality into discrete elements; the microcosm was reflected in the known macrocosm. When people came to agree on the manner by which the *totum objectivum* should be sliced, they regarded this knowledge as "objective." Ward commented,

In epistemology, "objective," we might say, means so much of experience as is common property.<sup>51</sup>

This agreement or communality of experience was arrived at through "intersubjective intercourse."<sup>52</sup>

Morality, value and worths also obtained objective status by this

process of moral socialism. That is, a majority of individuals independently selected behaviours which enhanced survival and the "betterment of the self". These behaviours were built up by past generations, and were maintained through evolution--an evolution which rested more on subjective selection than on natural selection. As people lived together in social groups, these moral behaviours aided their survival and promoted cooperation rather than competition.<sup>53</sup> Moral actions became so much a part of each individual's experience that they gained objective status. Morality grew out of the individual's struggles to survive and not out of obedience to ethical philosophy. Conation, even in morality, preceded cognition. It just so happened that the morality which grew out of the struggles of most individuals was of the Christian variety. Ward used this as evidence that God existed and that His hand in the creation gave direction to the individual pluralism he had adopted.<sup>54</sup>

The evolution of morality was based on the principles of human freedom and not on innate ideas. Pragmatism was the only rule for judging morals. J..E. Turner summarized Ward's ethical views,

The essential point is that our ruling moral principles and ideals have naturally developed from primary forms of volition...exactly as our basic scientific concepts have arisen...<sup>55</sup>

Volition--as subjective selection and conation--enabled the subject, through trial and error, to develop moral behaviour.<sup>56</sup> Moral actions rested neither on a person's obedience to some imposed ethical philosophy nor on a physical evolution of ideas through brain mechanisms. Moral action was owing only to individual freedom in pursuing

the goals of self preservation.<sup>57</sup> Moral intuition was an individual's seeking after the best possible action which would enhance survival.

Ward's moral philosophy was not based on natural science but on a science of inner experience. This science of experience, psychology, was the only science which could serve as the foundation for the social-moral order. Psychology, approached from the standpoint of the individual,<sup>58</sup> took into account the development of natural science. Therefore, Ward treated psychology not only as a science but as a basis for understanding science.

It was Ward's conception of psychology as a *metascience* that allowed him to resolve the paradox which marked Victorian social philosophy. Morality was based on principles of human freedom. This was without question Ward's contention. He also believed that this moral philosophy could be based on science. This science, however, could not be as narrowly defined as the science employed by Naturalism. Natural science merely organized presentations around assumptions gained from experience. The science of human experience, then was a more fundamental science than natural science.<sup>59</sup>

In light of this, Ward argued that natural science was not a basis for all knowledge.

(Science)...has started from the effects, the phenomena, and attempted to find causes without ever penetrating beneath the phenomenal sphere: it has always remained on the outside of things and ignored the inside altogether.<sup>60</sup>

Science, by restricting its focus to the "objective" outer world, ignored the inner world. Yet the activity of free agents, through

subjective selection and conation, created the uniformity of natural law. It was on the analogy of inner experience that humanity selected and organized the outer world.

"All nature", to repeat a summary I have made elsewhere, "is regarded as plastic and evolving like mind: its routine and uniformity being explained on the analogy of habit and heredity in the individual, of custom and tradition in society; while the variety is attributed to spontaneity in some form".<sup>61</sup>

Our understanding of nature, based on presentations selected from the *totum objectivum* according to individual interests, was the knowledge on which science was based. Science, by ignoring the inner realm, made the error of regarding presentations (our knowledge of things) as reality (the way things are). A cosmology which based its science on such a confused notion was doomed to failure. Further, such a science was unfit to form the basis for morality. Ward commented,

...it is plain that the conception of partial experience of the whole vast sum of things, however completely that experience is classified and transmuted into philosophy, is unsatisfactory, if not...contradictory.<sup>62</sup>

Ward insisted that science was merely the organization of "partial experience". Knowledge is plastic and can be altered to meet the ends of individuals. He argued that "the more completely we can interpret the world as a realm of ends the more completely the tables are turned upon naturalism".<sup>63</sup>

Morality, for Ward, could not rest on the scientific "fictions" offered by Naturalism. Rather morality rested on a science which gave room for faith. A science which recognized that human action rested not on knowledge but on a struggle after ends. Ward wrote,



...almost every forward step in the progress of life could be formulated as one act of faith--an act not warranted by knowledge...<sup>64</sup>

Psychology, the science of individual experience, was a science upon which Ward based his moral philosophy.

Written large in Ward's psychology was an epitaph for the Victorian social paradox which surfaced when the ideals of human freedom were restricted to a grounding, the certainties of a narrowly conceived science. Like other Spiritualists, Ward argued that human freedom was a fact of nature.

...there are no laws antecedent to the active individuals who compose the world, no laws determining them, unless we call their own nature a law; and then indeed the world would start with as many laws as there are individuals.<sup>65</sup>

He honed this reasoning to a sharper attack on Naturalism,

Life is the death of all natural philosophy, for "life means the capacity to act or change according to an internal principle..."<sup>66</sup>

Human freedom could not be based on natural science for this science did not recognize the activity of individuals. Morality had to rest on certain principles and not on the fictions created out of the philosophical confusions of the Naturalists. If morality was to find its grounding, it had to aspire to faith, "a sort of unscientific truthfulness".<sup>67</sup> All knowledge, even scientific knowledge, was the product of such a faith; a faith which operated when the subject, through trial and error, selected from the *totum objectivum* presentations which would sustain life.

Men sought expedient ways of sustaining themselves. Natural

science served this end as did moral development. As such, morality could no more find its grounding in natural science than natural science could find its grounding in moral systems. Rather, both owed their existence to the individual which struggled to sustain life. Both science and morality were on equal footing as both were edifices built through faith that the selections the subject made would procure survival of the self. Volition was the root of all intellection, social, moral and scientific. Volition, as subjective selection and conation, was the key to understanding all things.

Whether by design or by the motives and means hidden in the catacombs of an individual's mind, Ward's theory of volition, in addition to serving in a social debate, secured for him a personal and intellectual stability. The break up of his early life, severing his practical life from his personal beliefs, was either mended by his volitional theory or his theory reflected the ways in which he set about to heal himself.

Ward, unsettled by the demands of a reasoned materialism, grew further away from the Christian ideals he had been brought up believing. The reasoning of philosophy tore away at the foundations of his faith. He wrote his friend Wolestenholme many letters of despair but there was one letter (in 1870) which related to his friend how he had discovered the errors of his "unsound method". Ward thought that he had to "elaborate a philosophy before proceeding to deal with a revelation because philosophy deals with the presuppositions of a revelation..." But he came to realize that although "...logically this is the true

order...chronologically it is the false". Practical truths preceded philosophy. Ward came to believe that his attempts to elaborate a philosophy were futile because he was trying to "create out of nothing everything". Practical life became the base from which Ward began to construct the "new creed". His new creed had to be both logically appealing and, over and above this, it had to give direction and focus to practical living.

Ward found that the Christian life was the most fulfilling and sought to rest these "old ways" on a new creed. From the practical consequences of a life given over to Christ, Ward sought to work out a philosophy, an apology for Christianity "mere skeptic could not shake".

Ward began to wrestle with the frustrations of his personal life by first living morally and then developing a philosophy on which to ground beliefs and behaviours. He once commented that the survival of Christianity rested on "...noble living and fearless thinking". From the inward to the outward, from the truths of practical experience to the insights of philosophical reasoning, was the method Ward adopted in his personal life.

Ward's theory of volition was a shadow of his personal convictions. Conation preceded cognition. Practical ends determined the growth and development of all knowledge. Volition served as a testimony to the subject's inherent interests to first act and then work out a composite philosophy. Individual activity, practical actions were natural for the organism. Science, philosophy and all other forms of intellec-

tion served practical ends.

Ward's theory of volition also secured a basis which enabled him to put aside the criticisms of religious skeptics. No matter how detailed a criticism, no matter how consistent a criticism was in its logic, Ward's idea of subjective selection crippled the skeptic's skepticism. No one could say anything with certainty; man had only faith that individual propositions were true.

If knowledge could not ultimately be judged on principles of certainty or patterns of logic, Ward reasoned that the only remaining criterion for judging the "truthfulness" of knowledge resided in the practical realm.

...two opposite speculative hypotheses present themselves, which I must be content to designate as the religious and the non-religious. Neither, from the nature of the case, can logically refute and silence the other...The future of philosophy depends on the issue between these opposite hypotheses; and what I would suggest is that the issue will in turn depend on the practical results to which the two lead. It will be the case of the survival of the fittest.<sup>69</sup>

These opposed speculative hypotheses, that of Naturalism and Spiritualism, could settle their difference only in the future. To James Ward's way of thinking, one of these cosmologies would give more to life than the other and thus would provide new knowledge which in turn would bring the progress of humanity closer to its ideal end.

Knowledge that we could never attain, remaining what we are, may be attainable in consequence of higher powers and higher life, which we may morally achieve.<sup>70</sup>

Through trial and error, blind to the ultimate ends of any philosophical construction, Ward put his faith in the ends which would be

achieved by Spiritualism. Spiritualism accepted the individual as active and this was an experience Ward could not deny.

To conclude I will cite a statement from Ward,

In keeping with all this is the place of faith on the higher plain where it contrasts with intellectual sight: it is like a new sense that brings us face to face with an unseen world. What does this mean? Let us go back a step. Here as everywhere--in its highest as in its lowest form--faith is striving and striving is faith. The whole conscious being is concerned: there is not merely the cognition of what is, there is also an appreciation of what it is worth, a sense of promise and potency of further good that it may unfold; there is a yearning to realize this; and there is finally the active endeavour that such feeling prompts.<sup>71</sup>

## Notes:

The Biographical and Social Expressions of  
Ward's Theory of Volition

<sup>1</sup>Ward, J. Psychological Principles. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918, pg. 28.

<sup>2</sup>English, H. B., & English, A. C. A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms. New York, London, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958.

<sup>3</sup>For evidence of Ward's usage of these terms see his discussion in Psychological Principles (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 51-52.

<sup>4</sup>Ward, J. "Naturalism" In Encyclopaedia Britannica (11<sup>th</sup> edition), pg. 88.

<sup>5</sup>The term "objective" was used by Ward in different ways. In this case, as in most cases, the term was used to signify that which was not reducible to self or any modification of self.

<sup>6</sup>Ward, J. Psychological Principles (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 70.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pg. 61.

<sup>8</sup>The nineteenth century, like the century which preceded it, had a rather uncritical belief in progress. Darwin's application of natural selection to a developmental sequence helped to 'scientize' ideas of progress. Nineteenth century psychologists, conscious of their attempts to become more scientific, often entertained the ideas of development and progress in their theories. Ward was no exception.

<sup>9</sup>Ward commented "Begin at the beginning is a sound but commonplace maxim; and if it should be respected anywhere, it should—many think—be respected by philosophers. They, it has been said, are bound to seek truth without making assumptions." See Ward, J. "In the beginning..." In W. R. Sorley, & G. F. Stout (eds.) Essays in Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927, pg. 277. Ward realized the limitations of this strategy, "It is quite impossible for us now to imagine the effects of years of experience removed, or to picture the character of our infantile presentations before our interests had led us habitually to concentrate attention on some and to ignore others." Psychological Principles (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 44.

<sup>10</sup>Ward, J. Psychological Principles (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 63, footnote 1.

<sup>11</sup>I agree with D. W. Hamlyn that this was an original contribution by Ward. I disagree with Hamlyn on the point that this was his only original contribution. See D. W. Hamlyn, "Bradley, Ward, and Stout." In B. B. Wolman (ed.) Historical Roots in Contemporary Psychology. New York: Harper & Row, 1968, pg. 311.

<sup>12</sup>Ward, J. Psychological Principles. (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 30.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 41 and 46. Ward sometimes talked of psychical objects as being "subjectively objective" and physical objects as being "objectively objective".

<sup>14</sup>Ward, J. "Psychology" Encyclopaedia Britannica (9<sup>th</sup> edition). (1886), pg. 42. Also in Psychological Principles (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 47.

<sup>15</sup>Ward, J. Psychological Principles. (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 280-281.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 245.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 283.

<sup>18</sup>Ward, J. "Psychology" (op. cit. in note 14), pg. 43.

<sup>19</sup>Ward, J. Psychological Principles (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 361-371.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 280.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 72.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 63. Ward commented, "For...every concentration of attention in one direction involves, *ipso facto*, an equivalent excen-tration in another...in other words, concentration and diffusion of attention are but inverse aspects of one act." (pg. 63).

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 69.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 69.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pg. 57.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pg. 57.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pg. 41.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pg. 57.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pg. 45.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pg. 59.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pg. 57.

<sup>32</sup>Ward, J. "The present problems of general psychology". In H. J. Rogers (ed.) Congress of Arts and Science. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1906, vol. 5 (of 8), pg. 641.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pg. 649.

<sup>34</sup>Ward, J. Psychological Principles (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 303.

<sup>35</sup>For Ward representations were just that, 're'-presentations. They differed from presentation in that they were not as intense, vivid or constant. Representations were not mental modifications of presentations. Ward commented, "For in both these respects the real and the ideal, the actual and the possible, are alike. All the elements or qualities with the complex, and all the relations or those elements to each other, are the same in the rose represented as in the presented rose." (Psychological Principles, pg. 162.). The distinction between presentations and representations depended on the fact that presentations "bid independently for attention" while representations bid for attention through their associations. See Ward's discussion of this point in Psychological Principles, pg's 171-173.

<sup>36</sup>Ward, J. Naturalism and Agnosticism (vol. 2). London: Adam and Charles Black, 1903, pg. 134.

<sup>37</sup>Ward, J. Psychological Principles. (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 304.

<sup>38</sup>Ward, J. Naturalism and Agnosticism. (op. cit. in note 36), pg. 131.



- <sup>39</sup>Ward, J. Psychological Principles, pg. 197.
- <sup>40</sup>Ward, J. Naturalism and Agnosticism. (op. cit. in note 36), pg. 235.
- <sup>41</sup>Ward, J. "The present problems of general psychology". (op. cit. in note 32), pg. 649.
- <sup>42</sup>Ward, J. Psychological Principles, pg. 192.
- <sup>43</sup>Ward, J. "The present problems of general psychology". (op. cit. in note 32), pg. 649.
- <sup>44</sup>Ibid., pg. 639.
- <sup>45</sup>Smith, R. "The human significance of biology: Carpenter, Darwin, and the *vera causa*." In U. C. Knopelmacher and G. B. Tennyson (eds.) Nature and the Victorian Imagination. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977, pg. 230.
- <sup>46</sup>Ward, J. "Naturalism" (op. cit. in note 4), pg. 88.
- <sup>47</sup>This was the basis for Ward's pluralism. See The Realm of Ends: Pluralism and Theism. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1912. Also in "Mechanism and Morals" in W. R. Sorley and G. F. Stout (eds.) Essays in Philosophy. (op. cit. in note 9), Ward made the comment that "...we continually find the living passing over into the lifeless, just as conscious processes become mechanical reflexes; but we never find the converse process of life arising out of what has ceased to live." (pg. 244). Life, which for Ward meant activity, was a fact of nature, a property of the natural order and never the product.
- <sup>48</sup>Ward, J. "Psychology" (op. cit. in note 14), pg. 42.
- <sup>49</sup>Ward, J. Psychological Principles, pg. 281.
- <sup>50</sup>Brett, G. S. Brett's History of Psychology. Edited and Abridged by R. S. Peters. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1974. Brett on pg. 676, suggested that Bain was not entirely opposed to Ward's psychology but felt he went too far in assigning activities to the subject. Bain feared that Ward's subject may become a "nucleus and a hiding place of mysticism" (pg. 678)

<sup>51</sup>Ward, J. Psychological Principles (op. cit. in note 1), pg. 18.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pg. 31.

<sup>53</sup>Ward, J. The Realm of Ends (op. cit. in note 47), pg. 87, where he remarked, "each species develops for its advantage and not the detriment of others". He made his intentions clearer in "Mechanisms and Morals" (in W. R. Sorley and G. F. Stout, eds. Essays in Philosophy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), "...the ideal of moral order supposes a community of free persons severally distinct and peculiar, but all cooperating for a supreme end...In a word, the moral order at once relates each to all and all to each". (pg. 233).

<sup>54</sup>Ward, J. The Realm of Ends (op. cit. in note 47), pg. 447-448.

<sup>55</sup>Turner, J. E. "The ethical implications of Ward's philosophy". Monist 36 (1926) pg. 162.

<sup>56</sup>Ward, J. The Realm of Ends (op. cit. in note 47) pg. 80, "All that is required is that to advance to a higher level of life (which was a higher morality for Ward) share on the whole be more pleasurable or less painful than to remain behind. Now this condition seems provided, without any need for a clear prevision of ends or any feeling after improvement or perfection..." So the individual proceeds by trial and error guided by conation.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., pg. 68.

<sup>58</sup>Ward, J. "Psychology" (op. cit. in note 14), pg. 38-39. Ward discusses his reasons for choosing an individualistic approach to psychology. "In this sense...'the whole choir of heaven and furniture of earth' may belong to psychology..." (pg. 38). This standpoint made psychology the basis of all sciences.

<sup>59</sup>Ward's comment in The Realm of Ends demonstrates Ward's belief that psychology was the more fundamental because human experience was fundamental to all science: "the active individual...(composes)...the world, no law (determines) them, unless we call their own nature law". (pg. 75-76).

<sup>60</sup>Ward, J. "Mechanism and Morals" (op. cit. in note 53), pg. 241.

<sup>61</sup>Ward, J. The Realm of Ends (op. cit. in note 47), pg. 74.

<sup>62</sup>Ward, J. "The Progress of Philosophy." In W. R. Sorley and G. F. Stout (Eds.) Essays in Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927, pg. 138.

<sup>63</sup>Ward, J. The Realm of Ends (op. cit. in note 47), pg. 14.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pg. 415.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., pg. 76.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., pg. 75.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., pg. 416.

<sup>68</sup>"Memoir" pg. 25-26.

<sup>69</sup>Ward, J. "Progress of Philosophy" (op. cit. in note 62), pg. 140.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., pg. 140.

<sup>71</sup>Ward, J. The Realm of Ends (op. cit. in note 47), pg. 448-449.

## CONCLUSION

The primary directive of this thesis was to offer a "case study" of the biographical and social expressions of a psychological theory. In so doing I hoped both to encourage psychologist-historians to broaden their historiography and to make psychologists, in general, conscious of the possibility that theory may not transcend the influences of either a theorist's social context or a theorist's personal interests and ambitions. Further, I am inclined to argue that a theory in psychology, be it chosen from the past or the present, gains a clarity of expression when it is understood in the light of biographical and social factors.

Ward's theory of volition expressed his personal as well as his social concerns. This expression, however, was not limited to the general focus of his theory but also invaded the details of this work.

The general focus of Ward's ideas on volition argued for human freedom, the importance of individual experience in all matters of knowledge and humanity's dependence on faith, as man could possess only limited knowledge. Each of these propositions was worked out in the details of Ward's theory.

Man's freedom was regarded by Ward as a fact of nature. Human actions were not determined by antecedent conditions but by spontaneous changes initiated by an internal principle. "Life means the capacity to set or change according to an internal principle".

All of knowledge, according to Ward's theory, was the result of a volitional-intellectual process. Man selected presentations from

the *totum objectivum*. These presentations, organized by volition according to individual interests, made up man's perceived reality. Presentations were always objects which were defined by and presented to subjects. Presentations did not exist independent of subjects, though reality as a continuous stream did. Man, through volition, both selected his reality and was altered by this knowledge; this led to further differentiations of the presentational continuum. On this view, knowledge never transcended human experience. Knowledge was forever the expression of subjective selection.

Because man selected his/her reality from the *totum objectivum*, knowledge was always but a part of the outer reality. Humanity could only aspire to the knowledge of parts and pieces. Man's ignorance of the total reality was compensated for by faith. It was by faith that man acted not by knowledge. Conation preceded cognition. Man could not attain omniscience so room was left for faith in human reason.

Each one of these propositions--human freedom, the lack of total objectivity with respect to knowledge, and the function of faith in all human endeavours--expressed the social and biographical concerns of James Ward. Each proposition was, therefore, two dimensional. On the one hand a proposition served a social debate while, on the other hand, it fulfilled Ward's personal ambitions and interests.

Human freedom, regarded as a fact of nature, opposed the determinism of Naturalism while at the same time it enabled Ward to hold on to his belief in the "old life," "the old ways," which rested on Christian doctrines of man's freewill. Ward's contention that all

knowledge was the product of subjective selection challenged the notion that science was the fundamental basis for all knowledge. On Ward's view, science, as it was conceived by Naturalism was unfit as a basis for morality. Psychology could account for the development of natural science through subjective selection and, as such, psychology served as a basis for understanding science. The science of individual experience, then, was a more fundamental science on which to ground our understanding of human morality.

Knowledge, understood in the terms of subjective selection, made all knowledge subordinate to practical interests. In this way Ward mended the break which separated his practical living from his personal beliefs. The selective nature of knowledge served yet another personal interest for Ward: it guarded his religious views from the attacks leveled by skeptics. Ward, through his conception of the volitional-intellectual underpinnings of knowledge, made it possible for a disciple of modern thought to be religious.

The third proposition, that of the function of faith in all human endeavours, challenged Naturalism's right to set up a system of order which served as both the description and explanation of all phenomena. Such a cosmology made claims that *in principle* man could gain omniscience through the scientific method. Ward challenged this optimism. Because man selected presentations from the *totum objectivum*, man's knowledge, at any one time was incomplete. Man, then, did not act knowing with certainty the ends his/her selections would procure. Rather, man acted on the faith that his/her knowledge resembled reality

to such a degree that this knowledge would sustain survival. Man developed science itself on principles of faith, faith that the world was orderly, faith that events happened uniformly. Ward's upholding of this principle of faith sustained his belief in God. Faith was the one principle which Ward lived by; faith that he would find his "old life" again, faith that he would find God. His theory of volition ensured that faith operated in man's life, not by choice but by necessity.

Ward's theory of volition was by no means limited to the interests of a few scholars caged in by the boundaries of a single discipline. Ward's theory gained its form, focus, purpose and direction because it was both developed in light of and responded to, social and biographical considerations. Blinded by a narrow historiography, many psychologist-historians fail to recognize the broader issues which contribute to the origins and the development of a psychologist's theory. These psychologist-historians, then, tacitly create a world where psychologists limited their interests to include only psychological issues. A world where psychologists seem only to be in contact with other psychologists, writing letters only to colleagues who are also psychologists. In this historical world psychologists appear neither to have social interests nor to attend social functions other than those which involved their discipline. Their theories reflect neither personal interests nor social prescriptives. We are led to believe that these psychologists either never wrote anything outside of their discipline or if they did, these works were subor-

dinate to their interests. Such a sterile view of psychology and its participants finds no ecological validity either in today's world or in the societies of the past.



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