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GERTRUDE STEIN AND WALLACE STEVENS
The Performance of Modern Consciousness

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Sara J. Ford

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Preface

Literary modernists inherited a self that was fallible, a self that was seen as an ultimately failed gesture of expression, and throughout much modern literature is a sense of disillusionment with more traditional, expressivist notions of selfhood. As more conventional ways of thinking about consciousness became untenable, so too did conventional models of artistic expression. One modern strategy for dealing with this disillusionment was to ironize the artistic subject by framing it within various self-conscious gestures. Modern writers grappling with a highly determined notion of consciousness often articulated its status in theatrical terms—as a performance of sorts, in a highly theatrical world. Gertrude Stein and Wallace Stevens provide powerful examples of the modern attempt to stage the modern subject. This book examines particular kinds of "staging," both literal and metaphoric, in the plays and poetry of Stein and Stevens. By positing a staged or performed self, each writer negotiates some degree of agency for the artistic voice which must discover itself through its external relationships at the same time that it creates itself anew by challenging and renewing those determining forces.

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CHAPTER I

Consciousness Ungrounded

William James and Modernist Expression

If there were no passing states of consciousness, then indeed, we might suppose an abiding principle, absolutely one with itself, to be the ceaseless thinker in each one of us. But if the states of consciousness be accorded as realities, no such 'substantial' identity in the thinker need be supposed.

—William James, *Psychology*

Gertrude Stein and Wallace Stevens are not often considered together in the discourse surrounding literary modernism. Richard Poirier, who traces the influence of Emersonian thinking in later texts, is perhaps the most prominent scholar who has noted with care some of the profound similarities between these two modern writers. Nevertheless, the central concerns of scholars working with the two writers are significantly disparate. Scholars working with Stein's texts focus, for obvious reasons, on her concern with language, her disruption of generic categories, and her innovations in form. Feminist scholars in particular have paid a great deal of attention to Stein, and many contemporary feminist readers are involved in a broader move toward reclaiming Stein's achievement from its ambiguous position in earlier twentieth-century critical analyses. Scholars working with Stevens' texts often focus on his concern with the relationship between imagination and reality, discovering within his poems particular theories of poetry. Recently critics have focused on Stevens' engagement, or lack of engagement as the case may be, with the social and political climate of his day. These studies, along with several recent works that focus on those figures who most heavily influenced Stevens' poetics, have offered helpful connections between the often seemingly isolated figure at the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company and the literary, political, and social movements of which he was so importantly a part and product. As diverse as the critical schools surrounding these two authors seem to be, there remain some important issues in relation to which the two have a great deal in common.

The canons of both authors reflect a deep concern with a modern discourse concerning what it means to have, be, or express a self. Both authors concern themselves with new manifestations of consciousness in a modern world, and both develop important models of artistic expression that reflect these new ways of thinking about consciousness. The theater, both as a literal physical space and a metaphor for more abstract concepts, maintains an important position in the works of both Stein and Stevens, and it is the presence of that theater that this study will investigate.

The age of literary modernism was, of course, not the first to find its poets involved in the creation of a verse drama. Nevertheless, the period stands out as one in which such a drama seems to have been particularly crucial to the development of a great many of its poets. Stein and Stevens were hardly unique among modernist writers known primarily for poetry or prose who ventured into the theater. Others are T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats, James Joyce, W. H. Auden, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Edgar Lee Masters, E. E. Cummings, William Carlos Williams, and Robert Penn Warren. In general, however, critical discussions of modernism fail to address satisfactorily the importance of theater spaces to modern poets and their works, and very little attention has been paid to modern verse drama in recent years. One of the primary aims of this project is to suggest that we pay much closer attention to the dramatic productions of the modern poets who already hold firmly entrenched positions in our literary canon because they offer tremendously important insights into the theoretical worlds of the poets and their poetry. Specifically, the theater offered Gertrude Stein and Wallace Stevens an important opportunity to examine modern consciousness because there they could emphasize and examine self-consciously some of the particularly theatrical characteristics of modern subjectivity. Both as a literal space and as a metaphor, the theater provided Stein and Stevens the necessary vehicle through which to develop their models of modern consciousness and artistic expression. The two writers explore modern consciousness in their works, emphasizing the extent to which consciousness is determined by its external relationships. As they do so, both Stein and Stevens suggest that consciousness can be seen as a kind of performance—enabled by the "theater" of a given set of relationships and associations. The theatrical roles that enable selfhood are constrictive, in that the self cannot exist apart from them, and they also allow for the expression of consciousness to take place. Using the theater itself, both as a physical space and a metaphor, Stein and Stevens emphasized this performative view of consciousness and developed models of artistic expression that negotiate some degree of agency for the artist, even within the determining relationships of experience.

The few extended critical discussions of modern verse drama that exist are dated and limited. Denis Donoghue's *The Third Voice: Modern British and American Verse Drama* (1959), Vinod Sena's "Yeats on the Possibility

of an English Poetic Drama" (1966), Donna Gerstenberger's *The Complex Configuration of Modern Verse Drama* (1973), Wanda Rulewicz's "Some Modern Theories of Poetic Drama" (1973), and H. H. Anniah Gowda's *Dramatic Poetry* (1971) represent the majority of studies that have tackled the phenomenon as a whole. Although these studies offer a great many insights into the modern theater, all neglect consideration of the genre of drama in relation to the larger modern discourse concerning consciousness and artistic expression. Before introducing the importance of theater to Stein and Stevens, however, it will be necessary to provide some context for the notions of selfhood and artistic expression that are at stake in their shared concern with theatricality. The theater was an important artistic space for these two modernists because it allowed them a unique artistic perspective involving a high degree of self-consciousness. This emphasis on a self-conscious art is in large part a response to particular kinds of questions being raised about the modern self.

The concept of the self is at the heart of one of the most hotly debated and highly contentious discourses of the modern period. Philosophers, psychologists, anthropologists, and artists alike were consumed with the problem of a self that had been thrown into a seemingly inescapable arena of instability. The romantics had done much to destabilize a traditional, more coherent self, and the modern era brought with it further challenges. Pressures that threatened a dissolution of the self included a tension between a self determined or defined by various external factors, and notions of self-determination, agency, and free will. Was consciousness a mediated entity, depending on others for its definition, or was the self an unmediated entity, able to know itself exclusive of others? In the discourse of the period, we can also see a paradox identified by Charles Taylor, in his book, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Taylor notes that the modernists shifted their artistic focus inward.[1] Many modern writers focus their attention on the inner realms of consciousness. At the same time, however, and in the same works that mark this turn inward, we notice also a destabilization of the conventionally romantic expressive self.

Many already well-documented forces contributed to the modern dethronement of traditional notions of consciousness. Marx's focus on class argued for a self that was defined by its external circumstances rather than its permanent and stable core. Freud's psychoanalysis too, by arguing that the self is defined largely by early relationships to others, posed a vision of consciousness that was much less coherent, much less permanently centered, than was previously supposed. Also, the horror of World War I contributed to a widespread cultural loss of faith in the religious structures that had previously grounded the self in a more stable system of meaning. Of particular concern to literary modernists were those problems

that related most directly to the definition, value, and scope of artistic expression. These concerns are closely related to particular questions about selfhood being raised by the work of William James. As I will discuss later in this chapter, James' work in the fields of psychology and philosophy pointed to the particular difficulties inherent in attempts to claim for the self a significant degree of either coherence or agency, which in turn created a number of specific challenges to traditional notions of artistic expression. James' attention to the external relationships that determine and situate consciousness posed some important difficulties for those who would view the self as coherent and able to act upon the world, rather than be acted upon by its external relationships. And, once the self loses its grounding in either coherence or permanence, models of artistic expression too must be reconciled with a parallel enigma, must be seen in relation to an undeniable degree of determination.

It is helpful, in looking backwards, to look beyond William James to the visions of selfhood and expression offered up in earlier texts. Though Romantic visions of consciousness are varied and contested, they hinge on a model of artistic expressivity. That is to say, the Romantic poem posits a voice that is seen as a direct expression of a self which is much more stable and coherent than it will become in later Victorian poetry and, certainly, in modernist poetry. An expressive poetic is one that sees poetry neither as an imitation nor a symbolic equivalent of emotion, but as direct expression.[2] Wordsworth provides one of the best known examples of this Romantic expressive poetic. In his *Preface* to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, for example, he calls poetry "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."[3] Wordsworth develops this notion further in the *Preface*, suggesting a poetic that places more emphasis on the poet's own response to the object that motivates his emotion than on the object itself. This has led some readers to suggest that when "Wordsworth depicts an object he is also depicting himself, or, rather, a truth about himself."[4] Wordsworth did not imply that the model was without some degree of complication, and in the *Preface*, he adds a number of qualifications to his model. The poem is not the immediate feeling itself, claims Wordsworth, but is that which has been contemplated for some time. Poetry "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquility gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind" (Wordsworth, 400-1). There is a marked distance created between the original experience and the composition of the poem by the period of necessary contemplation, and there are changes inherent in the adaptation from feeling to verse. Another important complication in this model involves the relationship between artistic consciousness and the objects in nature that motivate the feeling to begin with. Nevertheless, for some romantics, poetry could break through a

mechanical existence threatening the self and restore us to the world "of nature and undistorted feeling" (Taylor, 457). The romantic emphasis on direct expression marks an important note for the background of this study in that it emphasizes the value that was placed on expressivist artistic models. Such models will become increasingly untenable over the course of the nineteenth century, and during the modern period, artistic expression will be seen at the center of a highly contentious discourse.

II

Though there are several crucial figures at the forefront of modernism whose works reflect important contributions to later theatrical manifestations of artistic expression, one figure of particular relevance for this study is William James. James (1842-1910) is an important figure for any discussion of the modernist self because his work in the fields of psychology and philosophy opened up new ways of framing consciousness and in many ways created—or at least articulated—the complex questions that plagued so many modernist writers. I do not mean, of course, to suggest that James was alone in either field. Freud, for example, had already done much to unsettle traditional visions of the self as having a stable and permanent core. I do think it important, however, to acknowledge James' significance in this modern discourse because of his influence on the work of Stein and Stevens and because his work specifically targets that element of the self with which we are the most concerned—its ability to be defined free from external experience and relationships. Through his writings and his work at Harvard, James' contribution to cultural visions of the self was connected to his success in changing the focal point of our attention in philosophical or psychological quests for truth and understanding. Reflecting in fascinating ways one of his most admired predecessors, Ralph Waldo Emerson, James insisted that we look for meaning not in either the self or the object but in the experience of the self with the object. In studying only what is knowable through experience, he changed the way we envision the self. Richard Poirier's *Poetry and Pragmatism* follows cogently the influence of an Emersonian subject in James' writing before looking at the same influence in the work of modern writers, including both Stein and Stevens. Poirier's work suggests that, in significant ways, Emerson's specific model of transcendence prepares the way for James' later and very much modernist model of selfhood. From a Jamesian perspective, one viewed the self by apprehending it as it experienced, by viewing consciousness not as a whole that is definable outside of experience but as an entity that is definable only in its various relationships with external experiences. This new perspective necessarily changed the way all discourses focused on and defined the self in that it created new intellectual enigmas, and it opened up new levels of inquiry in philosophy, psychology, and the arts.

William James taught psychology at Harvard for twelve years (1878 to 1890), the period during which both Stein and Stevens were students there, and he worked during this period on *Principles of Psychology* (1890), a text he believed would challenge the foundations of the field. In an 1887 letter to his brother Henry, James explains why his work was taking so long: "I must seem despicable for my slowness. But the truth is . . . the 'science' is in [a] confused and imperfect state."[5] A few years later he shared with his brother his continued frustration with what he believed to be the shoddy nature of psychology in general and, again, expressed his own belief that his work would be the defining voice in a fledgling field: "Psychology is in such an ante-scientific condition that the whole present generation of them is predestined to become unreadable old mediaeval lumber, as soon [as] the first genuine tracks of insight are made. The sooner the better, for me!" (James and James 1997, 237). With a background in physiology and medical studies, and with a great deal of enthusiasm for evolutionary theory, James could not be satisfied with a psychology that stressed the soul and the mind and ignored the body. His science of the self would be built on a theory of evolution that included consideration of the emotions and the senses. James' psychology marked a shift in the field from a discipline based on ethical and moral considerations to one based on the natural sciences. Related to this focus on the natural sciences are the two most important philosophical theories associated with James' work: pragmatism and radical empiricism. Under the umbrella of pragmatism, James called for philosophers to cease focusing on lines of inquiry that were not firmly rooted in "positive experienceable operations."[6] Instead of abstract quests for truths about God or free will, James called for a search for meanings that focused primarily on the experience of human life.

James developed his radical empiricism in direct opposition to both rationalism and British empiricism. His lifelong struggle against rationalism was based on his insistence that philosophy not be based on abstract conceptions. Radical Empiricism insists that reality be found in the study of experience. In opposition to rationalist thought, James argues that abstract conception is secondary in importance to experience because abstract conceptions are not necessarily grounded in anything tangible: "[T]he famous world of universals would disappear like a soap-bubble if the definite contents of feeling, the *thises* and *thats*, which its terms severally denote, could at once be withdrawn."[7] The rationalist thought James was working against held that there is a mysterious and unified ego or soul, and that all programs for defining that ego/soul rely on the inexplicable. James argued that such an ego/soul, inasmuch as it cannot be located in experience, represents a useless hypothesis. Because they focused less on the metaphysical, James held more affinities with the British empiricists. Empiricism involves a focus on life as it is lived through sensations of all kinds, a focus James embraced, but British empiricists, such as Locke and

Mill, had not, in James' view, taken their program to its logical conclusions and had fallen, in fact, into the trap of the rationalists—that of assuming before all else that there is some unified ego or soul. In moving away from both established schools of thought, James was able to envision the self in radically new terms.

In a chapter devoted to "The Self" in *Psychology: A Briefer Course*, James discusses consciousness in terms of two levels of inquiry and understanding: the self as known, and the self as knower, or the "me" and the "I." The self as known consists of various categories of identifiers: the material self, the social self, and the spiritual self. All of these categories make up the self as me, or the self that is known. The self as knower, the I, is "that which at any given moment *is* conscious, whereas the Me is only one of the things which it is conscious *of*. In other words, it is the *Thinker*."[8] This dichotomy seems clear enough, but, as James points out, the concept of the self as knower raises a question about the nature of that which is thinking. Is it a deeply imbedded and somehow permanent entity? Or is it, rather, the passing state of consciousness itself? In other words, is the self as knower a different self when apprehended at different moments of experience, or does it remain a single, unchanged entity? These questions highlight James' departure from the two traditional schools of thought mentioned above, for it is here that he breaks new ground. James emphasizes the importance of passing states of consciousness and argues that once we can see the differences in the self as it exists in different experiences, our need to base our knowledge on an abstract, single, unchanged self becomes highly suspect: "If there were no passing states of consciousness, then indeed, we might suppose an abiding principle, absolutely one with itself, to be the ceaseless thinker in each one of us. But if the states of consciousness be accorded as realities, no such 'substantial' identity in the thinker need be supposed" (James 1984, 181). According to the tenets of James' Radical Empiricism, states of consciousness are functional realities that make up experience: "This functional identity seems really the only sort of identity in the thinker which the facts require us to suppose" (James 1984, 181). Reality is only accessible contextually. James often discusses mental activity in terms of vision, and he recognizes that "thoughts are no more discrete than visual sensations, but are apprehended contextually, with varying degrees of clarity and focus, within an ever-changing mental field."[9] James does not necessarily negate the possibility of some sort of soul or ego at the center of the individual self but, rather, calls into question the usefulness of our apprehension of it. What is important here is the dramatic shift in attention, brought about by James, from the self as a unified, if indefinable, entity to the self as it experiences. The self as it experiences becomes the fundamental ontological fact: "The logical conclusion seems then to be that the states of consciousness are all that psychology needs to do her work with. Metaphysics or theology may prove the Soul to

exist; but for psychology the hypothesis of such a substantial principle of unity is superfluous" (James 1984, 181). In closing this particular discussion of the self, James considers the implications of his argument and is more understated than he could possibly have known as he muses, "I myself believe that room for much future inquiry lies in this direction. The 'states of mind' which every psychologist believes in are by no means clearly apprehensible, if distinguished from their objects. But to doubt them lies beyond the scope of our natural-science point of view" (James 1984, 191). Much future inquiry did indeed lie in this direction, and the decentering of the self would mark a crisis for many modernists.

Further, James called attention to elements of experience which had previously not been thought of as significant to visions of the self. In addition to substantive states of consciousness, those of which we are most likely to be aware, James also pays attention to what he calls "transitive states." Transitive states are "those feelings of tendency, significance, intention, intellectual and moral attitude, those inner movements of all sorts which we so persistently name after the goals towards which they aim, that finally we come to notice only the latter and to lose sight of the equally real transitive process which leads up to them."[10] Experientially, the intention to carry out an act is every bit as real as carrying out the act itself, even if the former is less memorable or less practically important. By incorporating even these seemingly less significant mental states into his vision of experience, James was able to create a realm broad enough and complete enough as to leave no gaps in that which can be studied as experience.

Importantly, one element of experience that is brought to light among the many seemingly less significant "transitive" experiences James discusses concerns the relationship between the self and language. In an 1884 article entitled "On Some Omissions of Introspective Psychology," James makes a distinction between various parts of speech, claiming that there are again substantive parts (those upon which a particular thought is based) and transitive parts (those that speak of the relationships of the substantive parts). James posits that language reflects the rhythm of our mental life: "Our mental life, like a bird's life, seems to be made of an alternation of flights and perchings. The rhythm of language expresses this, where every thought is expressed in a sentence, and every sentence closed by a period."[11] The resting or perching places in language are the substantive parts, the parts we are most aware of, and the places of flight are those that get us from one resting place to the next. We pay more attention, for example, to the noun and verb phrases of our thoughts than we do to the smaller and seemingly less significant prepositions and conjunctions: "We may then say that the main end of our thinking is at all times the attainment of some other 'substantive' part than the one from which we have just been dislodged" and that "the main use of transitive parts is to lead us from one substantive conclusion to another" (James 1884, 3).

Just as James emphasizes the equal reality of transitive mental states, so too does he emphasize the equal reality of these transitive parts of language and, therefore, the potential for the self to "experience" these language parts. In other words, though we may pay attention to our experience of the word "house" because we assume that it signifies an actual, physical entity, we also "experience" the words themselves and, indeed, experience even the transitive words that may surround "house" in a sentence: "There is not a conjunction or a preposition, and hardly an adverbial phrase, syntactic form, or inflection of voice, in human speech, that does not express some shading or other of relation which we at some moment actually feel to exist between the larger objects of our thought." And further, "We ought to say a feeling of *and*, a feeling of *if*, a feeling of *but*, and a feeling of *by*, quite as readily as we say a feeling of blue or a feeling of cold" (James 1884, 5). That we may have a relationship with language that is distinct from our relationship with the elements of the world that language signifies, a relationship with the signifier free of the signified is an idea that posed new questions for modern conceptions of language and the self. In his emphasis on the transitives of language, James decentralizes grammatical structures and diagrams a model of the subject using language in a web-like set of relationships—relationships between the self at any given moment and its language parts. This new model is one that had profound implications for the modern artists for whom language was the primary medium and one that has important implications for this study's examination of the work of Stein and Stevens.

To return for the moment to James' Radical Empiricism, it is necessary to consider specifically how such a program of inquiry might affect our perspective on the self. To do this carefully, I will use the example of a recent study involving the relationship between objects and individual subjects. The study was conducted on refrigerators and their users by a team of researchers from the University of California. Because the study follows the mandates of James' Radical Empiricism, particularly in its conclusions, a discussion of it was published as part of a 1985 celebration marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of James' death, and a brief elaboration of its findings can help us to see James' theories in application.

In 1980, a team of researchers attempting to find out more about the relationship between tools (or in this case appliances) and their users studied the use of refrigerators in a variety of households. The researchers took photographs of the insides of the boxes and had the subjects of the study keep diaries documenting their use of their refrigerators. What the researchers found severely challenged a "functional account" or a "rational account" of the refrigerator, those theories which would mandate that appliance use is a means to an end and that "there is assumed to be a discontinuity between person-using-appliance and the appliance itself, such that a person uses appliance but the appliance does not in any significant

sense use, identify, or define the person."[12] The reports about refrigerator use from the subjects of the study raised new questions in the minds of the researchers. Some users reported, subtly, that they would open the refrigerator and then analyze their behavior as an indicator that they were hungry. Other users reported uses of the refrigerators that they discussed in terms of the deviant and abnormal (a herpetologist who keeps a separate refrigerator for snakes, a couple who freeze their garbage, and a student who uses a fake 'Coke' can to store 'coke' or other controlled substances). These stories, because they were told as stories about abnormal refrigerator use, indicated that the users had a clear vision of what constituted "normal" use as well. They are stories which "constitute part of the verbal work that is done to keep the refrigerator within its proper 'frame'—work that indicates...the work that must be done by the person to literally constitute or accomplish what we know as a 'refrigerator'" (Hackett and Lutzenhiser, 320). Finally, users indicated that they used their refrigerators as a way to indicate some level of social standing or character, as in the case of those who admitted to keeping fresh fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator to "indicate our good intentions, but mostly we eat at Wendy's." The researchers also showed pictures of the refrigerators to observers, who saw not just boxes stored with food items but particular "types" of persons or families. For instance, a woman told researchers that when she dated a man, she would "early in the relationship make it a point to inspect his refrigerator to 'see what kind of a man he is'" (Hackett and Lutzenhiser, 320).

This foray into the kitchens of refrigerator users is useful here because it helps us to explain what happens when we follow James' dictates and look at the self only through its experiences. James, as discussed above, closed the gap between self and object, making it impossible to delineate one completely from the other. The results of the Hackett and Lutzenhiser study, for example, show that the subject/object dualism breaks down: "insofar as we can speak of a distinction between self and object within experience at all, the relationship is circular, with the self and object 'constituting' each other. Within experience, the dualistic notion of 'person-using-refrigerator' is replaced by 'refrigerator-user'; the tool being used defines the user" (Hackett and Lutzenhiser, 320). In the case of the users who admitted opening the refrigerator to learn how hungry they were, the tool is actually defining the need for which it is the solution. In the case of those users who talked of abnormal refrigerator use, and indirectly then of normal refrigerator use, the tool is actually being "performed" as much as it is being used as a means to an end. The refrigerator provides its users with a role that they, in turn, fulfill. The users are acting, in fact are being, according to their conceptions of what constitutes a person using a refrigerator. Once the distinction between self and object breaks down, we find a self that is defined at any given moment according to its relationship to the

object. The refrigerator, in a sense, enables merely the illusion of independent selfhood to be manifest, since the self is not definable free of the relationship. The subject/object relationship then provides the stage for a moment of selfhood to be performed.

As much as James' work contributed to a widespread challenge to traditional ways of looking at the self, he did not, importantly, suggest that we throw away entirely the conventional models that his various theses challenged. James is very much a modernist, and his sometimes paradoxical attitude toward definitions of consciousness reflects the contestational and seemingly unreconcilable nature of the modern negotiations of selfhood. In "The Will to Believe," the title work in his 1897 essay collection, James offers an argument in defense of conventional belief. He calls the essay a "sermon on [the] justification . . . of faith, a defence of our right to adopt a believing attitude in religious matters, in spite of the fact that our merely logical intellect may not have been coerced."[13] James has argued elsewhere that there is little point, from a psychological perspective, in paying attention to any elements of consciousness that are not manifest free from external relationships, for such elements are impossible to define. However, in this essay, James argues that lack of scientific evidence need not negate our ability to believe in the states of consciousness not supported by his program of scientific investigation. He addresses his essay to those "whose capacity for faith has been paralyzed by the notion that they cannot believe anything for which scientific evidence is lacking."[14] James goes on to offer several examples to support his claim that faith is better than eternal skepticism. So, though he challenged most of the conventional models of selfhood, he nevertheless seems to have wanted to maintain those models in one form or another. James argues that there can still be a permanent element of identity, a core or soul that requires faith as it cannot be determined by way of scientific, empirical evidence. Regardless, however, of James' insistence that a significant degree of faith in conventional ways of seeing the self in the world remained viable, his model of pragmatism nevertheless left behind a set of inescapable questions that he knew would seriously challenge those very models. In a letter to his brother following the 1907 publication of his book, *Pragmatism*, James shows his own awareness of the impact his ideas would have: "I shouldn't be surp[r]ised if 10 years hence it should be rated as 'epoch making,' for of the definitive triumph of that general way of thinking I can entertain no doubt whatever—I believe it to be something like the protestant reformation" (James 1997, 486).

The challenge presented by James' work which is most important to this study is that which suggests the difficulty of maintaining any model of selfhood which requires consciousness to be defined free from its external relationships. From a Jamesian perspective, if there is a distinguished and distinct soul or center in the self, it is neither knowable nor crucial for our