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WILLIAM JAMES' DEBT TO HERMANN LOTZE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to investigate the impact of Rudolph Hermann Lotze's ideas on William James. The article will show that several core concepts in James's *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) have been inspired by Lotze's work. Both authors notably agree that psychology is not a natural science. They express a sharp criticism of scientific psychology and of the associationist view of the mind. Lotze's arguments also underpin James's theories of ideomotor action, of emotions and of local signs. In short, James draws heavily on Lotze's philosophy to formulate many of the original claims in *The Principles of Psychology*.

KEYWORDS

RUDOLF HERMANN LOTZE. WILLIAM JAMES. PSYCHOLOGY. FEELING OF INNERVATION. IDEOMOTOR ACTION. LOCAL SIGNS. PRAGMATISM.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last decades of the 19th century, the philosophical and psychological ideas of the German philosopher, psychologist, and physician Rudolph Hermann Lotze (1817–1881) were highly influential not only in Germany, but also in the United Kingdom and the United States. Lotze had a substantial impact on early analytic philosophy (Gottlob Frege and, to an extent, also Bertrand Russell), descriptive psychology (Franz Brentano and Carl Stumpf), phenomenology (Edmund Husserl), the neo-Kantians (Heinrich Rickert and Wilhelm Windelband), Dilthey's philosophy of life, the British Idealists (Bernard Bosanquet, F. H. Bradley, James Ward, and Henry Sidgwick), Emily Elizabeth Constance Jones, as well as the American pragmatists William James, Josiah Royce, and George Santayana.

Regrettably, after the First World War, Lotze's philosophy fell into oblivion. Interest in Lotze has revived only in the last decade. This is evidenced by new editions in Germany of three of his most important texts, the first and the third book of his *Logik* edited by Gottfried Gabriel (1989), *Mikrokosmos* (2017) and *Medicinische Psychologie* (2021) edited by Nikolay Milkov, as well as by several scholarly publications devoted to him, among which one should mention at least *Late German Idealism: Trendelenburg and Lotze* by Frederick C. Beiser (Oxford University Press, 2013); *Hermann Lotze: An Intellectual Biography* by William R. Woodward (Cambridge University Press, 2015); and *Hermann Lotze's Influence on Twentieth Century Philosophy* by Nikolay Milkov (de Gruyter, 2023).

As already anticipated, the influence of Lotze's thought was not limited to the continental European tradition, but extended overseas to William James. However, whereas Lotze's influence in Europe is well known and much investigated, the relationship between Lotze's ideas and those of James is little known and very little studied. In this respect, while providing an overview of such a significant exchange of ideas between continental and American

philosophy, this article argues that a philosopher as fully embedded in the European debate as Rudolph Hermann Lotze had a remarkable impact on 20th-century American philosophy. One of the most important and influential American psychologists, James acted, for his generation, as the vehicle for the transmission of foreign ideas into psychology overseas. What he read, what he quoted, and what stimulated the development of his own positions not only acquired strong biographical significance for James himself, but also can still be found extending its roots in impactful theories in contemporary American psychology

Although James' ongoing interest for Lotze can be convincingly documented, one should not forget what sets the two clearly apart. Two major differences should be taken into account concerning: (i) their different interpretation of the knowledge *Vs* reality dualism and (ii) the role of chance. (i) Both Lotze and James deal with the issue of a dualism between knowledge and reality. Both ask whether or not the realm of nature can be genuinely revealed in the realm of thought. Their answer to this question differs in important respects. According to Lotze, a world in which there is an unbridgeable gap between thought and reality would be aesthetically absurd and morally repugnant. Therefore, a predetermined harmony between being and thought is postulated as necessary. According to James, however, Lotze's strategy would lead to a form of absolutism. James proceeds instead in the direction of a radical empiricism, anchored in the content of immediate experience and based on a psychology of direct perception. In *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, James takes clear distance from Lotze's philosophical premises. And in *A Pluralistic Universe*, he argues for an uncompromising pluralism as opposed to monistic idealism. James is convinced that radical empiricism can eliminate all dualistic dilemmas, and that pluralism can provide a way out of the substantive impotence of monism. Whereas Lotze responds to the issue of a potential dualism between knowledge and reality with an "intellectualistic" approach, that is, by establishing a principle of "faith", "that truth whatever it may be is

discoverable by thought, is the unavoidable postulate of all enquiry" (*Logic*, p. 421), James holds on to phenomenal continuity and does not seek a harmonizing instance beyond this continuity. In short, although it would not be fair to say that, in *A Pluralistic Universe* and *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, James rejects Lotze's ideas altogether, his view of the German philosopher's approach becomes increasingly critical.

(ii) Concerning the idea of contingency, Lotze's mostly metaphysical position is far from James's approach. Lotze is reluctant to admit pure chance in the realm of phenomena and prefers to refer to the action (*Wirkung*) of a divine creative intelligence. Unlike Lotze, James emphasizes instead the importance of probability in natural law and the selection of variations produced by chance. In his personal copy of Lotze's *Mikrokosmos*, in the chapter on "Knowledge and Truth", James adds in pencil the comment: "invincible reluctance to admit pure chance". In the chapter "Varieties of the Human Race", of the same book James writes: "selection not made use of once in all this discussion. Adaptation alone noticed". According to James, Lotze entirely forgets chance and selection, the core of evolution by natural selection. This forgetfulness could not be forgiven by a North American pragmatist (Woodward, 2015, p. 364-365).

Despite their differences, several, theoretically relevant similarities can be pointed out. On this subject, Otto F. Kraushaar published four articles between 1936 and 1940.[1] Kraushaar (1936, p. 235) draws attention on Lotze's influence on William James, and clarifies that the term 'influence' should "imply a kind of Socratic midwifery in the process of which the 'influencer' serves to develop and fortify ideas native to the 'influencee'". Paul Grimley Kuntz (1971, p. 65) even speaks in this respect of James' "dependence" on

[1] Otto F. Kraushaar, "Lotze's Influence on the Psychology of William James", *Psychological Review* 43 (1936): 235–57; "Lotze as a Factor in the Development of James's Radical Empiricism and Pluralism", *Philosophical Review* 47 (1938): 517–26; "What James's Philosophical Orientation Owed to Lotze", *Philosophical Review* 47 (1938): 517–25; "Lotze's Influence on the Pragmatism and Practical Philosophy of William James", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1, (1940): 439–58.

Lotze. My goal is to point out to what extent James' reception of Lotze's ideas contributed to shaping, in particular, James' *The Principles of Psychology*.[2]

Lotze is well known for arguing that psychology is not a natural science. In agreement with this core principle, James makes it clear that psychology cannot be reduced to mere naturalism. The theory he develops is rather a synthesis of empirical research and human views, whether metaphysical, moral, aesthetic, or religious (see section 2). Both Lotze and James point to the limitations of so-called scientific psychology. Both heavily criticize associationist psychology in particular (see section 4). This is also why, I argue, despite his claims to the contrary in the Preface to his work, James does not follow an anti-metaphysical approach throughout *The Principles of Psychology*, but on the contrary, also deals with issues of full metaphysical relevance, for example, the issue of free will. Needless to say, James's reception of Lotze does not stop at this general attitude. What follows will show how Lotze's theories underpin James's notions of ideomotor action and of the genesis of emotions (see sections 3 and 6). In addition, an overview will be provided of James's reworking of Lotze's theory of local signs (see section 5). In short, I will argue that James draws heavily on Lotze for many of his original formulations.

2. HERMANN LOTZE AND WILLIAM JAMES ON PSYCHOLOGY

James was a passionate reader of Rudolph Hermann Lotze's works, in particular, of *Medicinische Psychologie* and *Mikrokosmos*.[3] This is documented in *The Principles of Psychology*, where James mentions Lotze in the "Preface" among those who provided the "inspiration" of his first "literary venture" (James, PP I, p. vii). A closer look should then be taken at what this "inspiration" entails.

[2] References to this work (henceforth: PP) are to the 1950 reprint of the text originally published in 1890: William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (New York: Dover Publications, 1950). All form of emphasis in the quotations are in the original.

[3] James bought a copy of the *Medicinische Psychologie* in 1867 in Germany and there is a great number of notes in his copy that prove an accurate and detailed reading of the book (See: Woodward, *Hermann Lotze. An Intellectual Biography*, p. 224). James also admired Lotze's *Metaphysic* and Lotze's contributions to Rudolph Wagner's *Handwörterbuch der Physiologie*.

The core idea that James draws from Lotze's *Medicinische Psychologie* is that psychology must be guided not only by empirical facts and experimental investigations, but also by the acknowledgement of moral and religious values. Whereas scientistic radicalism would tend to reject any non-empirical aspect (Lotze, 2021, 35ff),[4] James is adamant that good theory or hypotheses must take into account both worlds. James also crucially sees that Lotze's disdain for any attempt to link the activity of thought, in all its articulations, to cerebral functions exclusively does not imply that he would rather subscribe to speculative spiritualism. According to Lotze, the search for truth in psychology requires a synthesis between observational facts (*Thatsachen des Augenscheins*) and the principles of criticism or judgment (*Principien der Beurtheilung*); this synthesis is called "reflective observation (*reflectirende Beobachtung*)". In his *Medicinische Psychologie* Lotze argues that, in psychology, mere empirical-experimental observations are not sufficient to clarify the relationship between the mind and the body. Observational data are not univocal and unambiguous, but need to be interpreted. In the preface to this book, Lotze includes a trenchant quotation from the German physiologist Alfred Wilhelm Volkmann:

> Microscopic examinations in this field will never lead to meaningful conclusions, because even the most accurate observation is an ambiguous thing. Everyone does what they want with these observations; what they are allowed to do with them depends on previously acquired physiological experience. (Lotze, *Med. Psy.* vi, my transl.)

Lotze's main motivation to write a *Medicinische Psychologie* is to contribute to medical studies with the added benefits of a philosophical point of view. In so doing, he aims to better clarify the interrelationships between body and mind, while leaving out anything pertaining to merely speculative psychology. Lotze makes clear that his book is not about pure philosophy, but rather reviews several views on the relations between physical and mental life. It goes without saying that ideas about mind–body relations are seen as

[4] Henceforth *Med. Psy.*

dependent on their more general philosophical framework. According to Lotze, the materialist and scientist belief that concrete science is based on experience only is one-sided. By way of counterbalance, Lotze argues that all experience, in order to become science, presupposes principles of judgment, that cannot be provided via experience or microscope, but only by means of a metaphysical knowledge of things. The great puzzle in Lotze's inquiries is indeed the relationship between experience and speculation. He therefore attempts to find a viable way out of such an enigma, by acknowledging that: (i) the facts of experience (*Thatsache der Erfahrung*) are of great importance, being the core of all scientific content; (ii) the simplest principles of judgment (*Principien der Beurtheilung*) are of equal importance, in that they always determine the direction in which scattered scientific content is unified into the whole of a complete vision; (iii) in between the facts of experience and the principles of judgment a mostly uncertain field of knowledge remains concerning the concrete laws (*concrete Gesetze*) regulating the relation between mental and physical life. Such laws will not be found by speculation alone, nor by microscopic investigation (i.e. experience) alone, but only by reflective observation (*reflectirende Beobachtung*), that subsumes the facts of experience into speculative principles. These premises should not be taken to imply, though, that metaphysics should be seen as the foundation of psychology. According to Lotze, metaphysics is incomplete, and therefore incapable of serving as a basis for psychological inquiry. Undoubtedly, Lotze argues, this deficiency is also common to science, and there will never be any other means, with the exception of philosophy, capable of providing science with greater solidity. Science and philosophy must therefore work together (*Anknüpfung*) (*Kleine Schriften*, vol. 3, 1 ff.).

Besides the above outlined scientific knowledge of the mind, there is another kind of non-scientific knowledge, which Lotze calls "practical wisdom" or intelligence (Lotze, *Med. Psy.*, p. 4). Such unscientific knowledge of the mind and mental life has been developed by humanity throughout history, and is

found in traditions, works of art, literature, morality, and religion. Lotze's goal is to develop an understanding of the life of the mind that clearly satisfies the demands of science, but also leaves room for moral and religious insights. These latter are indeed seen as having an equal right to deal with the subject of the mind, and should not be completely excluded from debates, as the materialistic furore that Lotze calls the "passion" of his time instead tends to do. Lotze's task is then to hold together the general foundations of psychological inquiry without losing touch with those elements of human education which, beyond physiology, move human thought, and from whose influence the naturalist cannot or should not seek to escape, either in life or in science (Lotze, *Med. Psy*, p. 8).

In full agreement with Lotze, James believes that human views on the world, including moral and religious views, are key elements in the search for truth in psychology. As he presents the array of alternative psychological theories one could choose from, James writes that:

> Which theory is then to be believed? *That theory will be most generally believed which, besides offering us objects able to account satisfactorily for our sensible experience, also offers those which are most interesting, those which appeal most urgently to our aesthetic, emotional, and active needs.* (James, PP II, p. 312)

With striking affinity, in James's words, one can find the echo of Lotze's idea that the results of the scientific study of the mind should not conflict with human aesthetic, moral, and religious needs.

According to both authors, psychology must postulate the dualism of mind and body. Both speak in this respect of a psycho-physical mechanism of interaction, and seek to get to the formulation of the laws of this interaction itself. However, this interaction between mind and body is never seen as the subject-matter of an exact science; it must rather be understood as "occasionalism" (Lotze) or as "empirical correlation" (James) between the mind and the brain (James, PP I, p. vi; Lotze, *Med. Psy*, p. 77-80). Lotze's approach to the work of psychology, in particular, does not stop at the identification and

description of correlations. From the facts of mental life, Lotze infers the existence of an actual soul.[5] In *The Principles of Psychology*, James' position in this regard appears to be different in some respects, but undeniably close to Lotze's in others. According to James, as soon as psychology establishes the empirical correlation of various kinds of thoughts and feelings with certain conditions of the brain, it reaches a limit which cannot be overcome. This means that any question concerning the soul is beyond the competence of scientific psychology; they are, in fact, metaphysical questions.

In short, while according to James, the task of psychology is merely to ascertain the correlation, Lotze confidently postulates the existence of a mind unifying all mental states. This mentalistic claim is clearly rejected by James, who sees as his task as merely collecting, describing and correlating mental states. Differently, Lotze understands mental states as the effects of deep-rooted causes in the mind.

In the "Preface" to the *Principles*, James claims to maintain the viewpoint of natural science throughout the book. He also clearly distinguishes psychology as a natural science from metaphysical psychology. As a natural science, psychology uncritically assumes certain data as basis for its research: "(1) *thoughts and feelings*, and (2) *a physical world* in time and space with which they coexist and which (3) *they know*" (James, PP I, vi). While the task of metaphysics is to "discuss" such elements, the task of psychology is to assume the existence of these elements and to "ascertain" "the empirical correlation of the various sorts of thought or feeling with definite conditions of the brain, can go no farther––can go no farther, that is, as a natural science. If she goes farther, she becomes metaphysical" (James, PP I, vi). Psychology becomes metaphysical when it "explains" thoughts or feelings based on deep-level causes such as "mind" or "the elementary units of consciousness". In this respect, James establishes an opposition between associationist theories and spiritualist

[5] However, Lotze does not mean the soul in a substantive sense, but in a dynamic sense (Cf., Lotze, *Med. Psy*., p. 121–122). He also calls it "phenomenological expression" (*Med. Psy*., 137 ff.). The soul has a corporeal meaning, and the body has a mental meaning (Med. Psy., §§ 7–8).

theories.[6] However, this so to speak anti-metaphysical approach, as laid out in the "Preface", is not consequentially followed throughout his work.

During his stay in Germany in 1868 (Dresden, Berlin, and Heidelberg), James came into contact with the scientific psychology of Johannes Petrus Müller's school, and the contributions of Hermann von Helmholtz and Wilhelm Maximilian Wundt. Building on his experience in Germany, James founded in 1875 one of the first experimental laboratories of psychology at Harvard University. Wundt opened his own laboratory in Leipzig a few years later, in 1879. Granville Stanley Hall, James' former student, opened his own laboratory at the Johns Hopkins University in 1881.

However, while writing his work, James can be seen as becoming progressively more critical towards the purely scientist approach to psychology. In other words, James' anti-metaphysical attitude does not amount to a total endorsement of scientific psychology.[7] As James writes:

> The spiritualist and the associationist must both be 'cerebralists', to the extent at least of admitting that certain peculiarities in the way of working of their own favourite principles are explicable only by the fact that the brain laws are a codeterminant of the result. Our first conclusion, then, is that a certain amount of brain-physiology must be presupposed or included in Psychology. […] Mental states occasion also changes in the calibre of blood-vessels, or alteration in the heart-beats, or processes more subtle still, in glands and viscera. If these are taken into account, as well as acts which follow at some remote period because the mental state was once there, it will be safe to lay down the general law that no mental modification ever occurs which is not accompanied or followed by a bodily change. (James, PP I, p. 4–5)

'Cerebralism' means, in James' interpretation, that there is a correlation between physical and mental states. However, such a correlation should not be understood in the terms of, for instance, the back then very popular Weber's

[6] In the second half of the 19th century, Francis Bowen, leading figure of the American academic psychology (he had been professor at Harvard University), still investigated the faculty of the mind. This was the context against which James' empiricist and anti-metaphysical approach stood out as definitely new.

[7] It is important to highlight that James' interest was wide-ranging. Alongside the chapters that demonstrated an accurate knowledge of the most recent studies of cerebral physiology, there were chapters of clear metaphysical relevance (e.g. chapter VI, *The Mind-Stuff Theory*).

Law. Weber's Law establishes a logarithmic relation between body and mind. The standard text in scientific psychology at the time, namely Wundt's *Grundzüge der physiologischen Psychologie* (1874), for instance, adopts Gustav Theodor Fechner's interpretation of Weber's Law.

However, James is very critical of Fechner's interpretation as well as of the Weber's Law. According to Fechner, "the just-perceptible increment is the sensation-unit" and, consequently, all our sensations would be masses of sensation-units. James calls the associationist theory considering sensations as "masses of units combined" "fragile" and "absurd". In his view, it all amounts to an attempt to turn psychology into an exact science which is bound to fail (James, PP I, p. 545–9).

According to James, approaching human mental states and human behaviour in terms of simple logarithmic increments means to disregard a fundamental factor, that is to say, the human ability to act according to ends. In this respect, in his *Principles*, James explores at length the metaphysical topic of the relationship between mechanism and teleology as well as the topic of free will (James, PP I, p. 6–11).

3. THE WILL: THE FEELING OF INNERVATION AND THE IDEOMOTOR ACTION IN LOTZE AND JAMES

As previously mentioned, the psychophysical law of stimulus-reaction reduces human behaviour to a mere logarithmic increase. While this certainly has the advantage of simplifying the work of analysis in the lab, it fails to account for the purposiveness (or intentionality) of consciousness, and tends to establish a purely mechanical link between body and mind.

James's approach, instead, establishes a correlation between mind and body––in fact, cerebralism states that mental modifications are accompanied or followed by bodily changes––which is interpreted in a voluntaristic, and not mechanical, way.

A whole chapter in *The Principles* is devoted to the functions of the brain as an organ of the mind. A wide-ranging knowledge of physiological studies in this field is displayed there, including references to contributions by Pierre Paul Broca, David Ferrier, Carl Wernicke, Wilhelm Maximilian Wundt, Luigi Luciani, and Gabriele Buccola (James, PP I, Ch. II). Their insights allow James to set the ground for his evolutionary approach, and the outline, in 1907, of his "functional psychology" (James, 1907). It should also be added that, although James openly criticizes Herbert Spencer's definition of the mind as correspondence to the outer reality, and consequently rejects the idea that the mind is a simple effect of the external environment on the nervous system, he eventually adopts Spencer's idea that the essence of mental and bodily life is "the adjustment of inner to outer relations" (James, 1878).[8] Mind inhabits the environment; this latter acts on the mind and the mind on the environment. James concludes that:

> On the whole, few recent formulas have done more real service of a rough sort in psychology than the Spencerian one that the essence of mental life and of bodily life are one, namely, 'the adjustment of inner to outer relations'. Such a formula is vagueness incarnate; but because it takes into account the fact that minds inhabit environments which act on them and on which they in turn react; because, in short, it takes mind in the midst of all its concrete relations, it is immensely more fertile then the old-fashioned 'rational psychology', which treated the soul as a detached existent, sufficient unto itself, and assumed to consider only its nature and properties. (James, PP I, p. 6)

The body or, to be more precise, the nervous system is placed in an environment with which it shares a mutual action, which is not only mechanical but also teleological (James, 1879). Mechanical actions are different from mental or intelligent actions, in that the latter are able to pursue an "end" and to find

[8] According to James, the mind is not a mirror that passively reflects what happens in front of it, but an active intelligence that consciously wants and tries to achieve goals through a process that may be successful or fail.

the most adequate "means" to achieve it.[9] As iron filings are directed towards the magnet, so instincts and reflex acts are certainly mechanical actions tending to a certain end, that is, self-preservation. However, when the environment creates a new situation in which we cannot achieve a particular end with the usual means, one's consciousness chooses other means to achieve it. This is what James terms intelligent action. In his words:

> The mental life seems to intervene between impressions made from without upon the body, and reactions of the body upon the outer world again. […] *The pursuance of future ends and the choice of means for their attainment are thus the mark and criterion of the presence of mentality* in a phenomenon. We all use this test to discriminate between an intelligent and a mechanical performance. […] Just so we form our decision upon the deepest of all philosophic problems: Is the Kosmos an expression of intelligence rational in its inward nature, or a brute external fact pure and simple? If we find ourselves, in contemplating it, unable to banish the impression that it is a realm of final purposes, that it exists for the sake of something, we place intelligence at the heart of it and have a religion. If, on the contrary, in surveying its irremediable flux, we can think of the present only as so much mere mechanical sprouting from the past, occurring with no reference to the future, we are atheists and materialists. […] *No actions but such as are done for an end, and show a choice of means, can be called indubitable expressions of Mind*. (James, PP I, p. 6–11)

Within his 'cerebralist theory' James ultimately tries to combine naturalistic psychology with philosophical-metaphysical issues such as the mind–body problem and the mechanism—teleology relation.

Unlike spiritualism and rational psychology, James does not see consciousness as a priori mind devoid of a temporal development. His approach to consciousness is a dynamic one. This amounts to saying that consciousness is located in time and within the environment which affects its development. The nervous system is no longer seen as a mechanism producing mental states, but rather as a dynamic system collecting environmental input; the latter is interpreted by the mind according to the binary option means–ends, which in turn produces the body's output in the form of a reaction to the

[9] See James, PP I, Ch. 1. James' notion of end is similar to the Aristotelian concept of *causa finalis*.

environment. This is how, in James' account, a dynamic system replaces the mechanical one.

It goes without saying that James's theory of mind as dynamic system detecting the most adequate means to pursue its ends raises the issue of human freedom. It is clear then why James' psychology could not be kept within the limits of naturalism. These theoretical questions can only be tackled by metaphysics. In this respect, James resorts once more to Lotze's *Medicinische Psychologie*.

As a strong supporter of the idea that psychology cannot be a natural science, Lotze points out that, unlike physics, psychology deals with physical and mental movements that are incomparable. In his understanding, physics accounts for a following physical state based on a preceding physical state as its precondition, and connects the former to the latter via a causal link. That is why physics has the constructive form of science. However, Lotze argues, between a physical state and a mental state such a change of state occurs that makes the two states incomparable. Knowledge is irremediably missing, though, of the intermediate element that makes this change of state possible and allows us to causally link a physical state to a mental state. On this ground, psychology cannot aspire at having the constructive form typical of natural science. Consequently, Lotze develops an occasionalistic interpretation of the relations between mind and body. It should be added that this occasionalistic interpretation does not preclude the possibility of scientific research in psychology. Lotze understands scientific research in psychology as indicating which material stimulus is "correlated" or associated with which mental state. From the composition of these pairs of internal and external events an idea of the whole interaction (*Wechselwirkung*) between body and mind, that is, the physiological life of the mind, is gained. Experience generally shows us that a bodily state produced by external stimuli is "correlated" to a mental state; Lotze calls this relationship "occasion" (*Veranlassung*). On this point, a strong agreement can be again detected between James and Lotze. According to both,

psychology "describes" the empirical "correlation" between physical and mental states. The "explanation" of how and why a physical state is transformed into a mental state is not a question that can be tackled by psychology. It is a "metaphysical" question (James, PP I, p. v-vii; Lotze, *Med. Psy*, p. 76-80). Unlike Lotze and James, leading figures of the time like Fechner rejected dualism in psychology and accepted the monistic view according to which mind and body are different aspects of the same thing. According to Fechner, all mind–body relations are made by simple elements that grow logarithmically in accordance with the stimulus that generated them. On this ground, Fechner advocates an associationist theory of the mind. The mind is an association of smaller elements, that is to say, sensations. Lotze and James stand together in clearly rejecting this view.

In short, according to James, the environment affects our body and mind; the mind, in order to achieve its ends, induces bodily changes. The main role in this is played by the brain; in fact, the brain is the point of connection between freedom of mind and neurophysiological determinism. The brain is in this respect the place of the mind's realization. In fact, once it has freely chosen the end to be pursued, this choice becomes "effective" and enters the mechanical realm. The mind employs the nervous system to effectively achieve its ideal ends. The nervous system works in accordance with the laws of neurophysiology, that is, in a mechanistic way; once the mind has given the nervous system the input to pursue an end, the nervous system proceeds in accordance with its own laws. Finalism and mechanism, free will and necessity are concretely interconnected in James' psychology. In this respect, it can be argued that James's theory is remarkably similar to what Lotze presents in his *Allgemeine Physiologie des körperlichen Lebens* (1851).[10]

[10] See Lotze, *Allgemeine Physiologie des körperlichen Lebens*, 114; Lotze, *Med. Psy.*, 292. Whereas according to Lotze the purposiveness of nature has a universal significance, for James it is related to the subjectivity of the single individual able to adapt to the environment. This idea is possibly rooted in the pragmatic and individualistic American mindset.

Like Lotze, James advances a psychology that postulates the dualism of mind and nervous system—central and peripheral. Furthermore, scientific psychology refrains from dealing with the question of *how* a physical state of the nervous system becomes a mental state; it is assumed, in fact, that psychology cannot provide a theory of the true nature of this interaction between mind and nervous system. Scientific psychology postulates then a dualism, since it serves the purposes of the practical implementation of science (Lotze, *Med. Psy*, p. 65). As Charles Mercier puts it:

> Having thoroughly recognized the fathomless abyss that separates mind from matter, and having so blended the very notion into his very nature that there is no chance of his ever forgetting it of failing to saturate with it all his meditations, the student of psychology has next to appreciate the association between these two orders of phenomena. […] They are associated in a manner so intimate that some of the greatest thinkers consider them different aspects of the same process. […] When the rearrangement of molecules takes place in the higher regions of the brain, a change of consciousness simultaneously occurs. […] The change of consciousness never takes place without the change in the brain; the change in the brain never … without the change in consciousness. But *why* the two occur together, or what the link is which connects them, we do not know, and most authorities believe that we never shall and never can know. Having firmly and tenaciously grasped these two notions of the absolute separateness of mind and matter, and of the invariable concomitance of a mental change with a bodily change, the student will enter on the study of psychology with half his difficulties surmounted. (Mercier, *The Nervous System and the Mind*, p. 9–11)[11]

James also maintains that through concepts such as "concomitance" or "absolute separateness" scientific psychology has not overcome the problem of the mind–body relationship but simply circumvented it. On whether or not psychology should try to give answer to this metaphysical problem, James writes that:

[11] See also James, PP I, 135–6.

> The fact is that the whole question of interaction and influence between things is a metaphysical question, and cannot be discussed at all by those who are unwilling to go into matters thoroughly. (James, PP I, p. 136)

Further input on consciousness' "interaction" with and "influence" on the body is drawn by James from Lotze's notion of *Doppelsinnigkeit* of the ideal, as laid out in *Medicinische Psychologie*, according to which feelings and ideas are forces able to cause body movement (Lotze, Med. Psy., 75 ff.). On this matter, James claims, for instance, that:

> As in the night all cats are gray, so in the darkness of metaphysical criticism all causes are obscure. But one has no right to pull the pall over the psychic half of the subject only, as the automatists do, and to say that *that* causation is unintelligible, whilst in the same breath one dogmatizes about *material* causation as if Hume, Kant, and Lotze had never been born. One cannot thus blow hot and cold. One must be impartially *naif* or impartially critical. If the latter, the reconstruction must be thorough-going or 'metaphysical', and will probably preserve the common-sense view that ideas are forces, in some translated form. (James, PP I, p. 137)

This is where one can find Lotze's theory of mind as a force causing bodily movement at play in James' psychology. Also James' key tenet that consciousness is impulsive by nature (James, PP II, p. 526) can be seen as originating in Lotze's *Medicinische Psychologie* (Kraushaar, 1936, p. 250ff). But there is more.

According to James, kinaesthetic ideas are the defining feature of voluntary acts. This amounts to saying that when we consciously want to perform an act, we have in our mind an idea made of memory-images of the sensible effects of our act (James, PP II, p. 492). Within this framework, though, James does not include the feeling of innervation, which is instead pivotal in the psychology of leading names such as Alexander Bain, Wundt, Helmholtz and Ernst Mach (James, PP II, p. 516). In the voluntary act, they would maintain, in addition to memory-images, a current of energy runs out from the brain and through the muscles. This current of energy produces a feeling of innervation (*Innervationsgefühl*). According to James, the discharge of energy from the brain

through the motor nerves transmits movement to the appropriate muscles and is an insentient process (James PP II, p. 493). It does not produce feeling.

Whereas Bain, Wundt, Helmholtz and Mach uphold an "efferent" interpretation of the muscular-feeling (*Muskelgefühl*), according to which it is produced by outgoing energies from the brain, James supports an "afferent" interpretation of the same feeling. James does not see this muscular-feeling as "outgoing" from the brain and then directing towards the muscle, but, on the contrary, as an effect of the muscle contraction that through "incoming" nerve currents becomes a feeling. The idea guiding James' critique of the feeling of innervation as a prerequisite for the voluntary act, alongside the memory-images, is that consciousness is simple; it tends to a minimal level of complication (James, PP II, p. 496).

Interestingly enough, an afferent interpretation of *Muskelgefühl* can be found also in Lotze's *Medicinische Psychologie*. As James puts is,

> In his admirably acute chapter on the Will this author [Lotze] has most explicitly maintained the position that what we called muscular exertion is an afferent and not an efferent feeling: "We must affirm universally that in the muscular feeling we are not sensible of the *force* on its way to produce an effect, but only of the *sufferance* already produced in our movable organs, the muscles, after the force has, in a manner unobservable by us, exerted upon them its causality" (Lotze, *Med. Psy.*, p. 311). How often the battles of psychology have to be fought over again, each time with heavier armies and bigger trains, though not always with such able generals! (James, PP II, p. 523)[12]

[12] Lotze also writes: "Unmittelbar hat daher das Muskelgefühl wenig Anspruch auf den Namen eines *Kraftsinnes*; er gebührt ihm selbst in der Art noch nicht, dass es die Kraft, statt sie direct zu messen, vielmehr nach der Grösse ihrer nutzbaren Wirkung schätzte. Denn nicht sowohl die Intensität der functionellen Thätigkeit des Muskels scheint das zu sein, was in ihm empfunden wird, sondern vielmehr die Grösse der Störung oder der Ermüdung, die mit der Ausübung derselben verbunden ist, und die weder Gradunterschieden der Innervation, noch dem erzeugten nutzbaren Effecte der Muskelcontraction überall proportional ist" (Lotze, *Med. Psy.*, p. 311). In short, according to Lotze, the muscular-feeling is produced not by the amount of *energy* that running through and moving muscles, but by the amount of *effort* present in the muscle after movement, as its effect.

In James' view, then, the kinaesthetic idea, as described above, is sufficient to produce bodily movement. He calls this "type of the process of volition" "ideomotor action" (James, PP II, p. 522), and is evinced in the *quasi*-automatic acts in which the flux of thought immediately stimulates the bodily movement. One more quotation from Lotze's *Medicinische Psychologie* is added in this context, already providing the core features of said process of volition. In James' translation,

> We see in writing or piano-playing a great number of very complicated movements following quickly one upon the other, the instigative representations of which remained scarcely a second in consciousness, certainly not long enough to awaken any other volition than the general one of resigning one's self without reserve to the passing over of representation into action. All the acts of our daily life happen in this wise: Our standing up, walking, talking, all this never demands a distinct impulse of the will, but is adequately brought about by the pure flux of thought. (PP II, 523, James' translation of *Med. Psy.*, p. 293–4)[13]

According to both authors, in elementary cases of volition there is no gap between the idea and the action. No antagonistic representation interferes with the original representation, and consciousness can express itself impulsively. In other words, one could claim that, in the absence of other antagonistic ideas simultaneously present in the mind, all ideas would turn into action.

In order to better frame what the impulsive nature of our consciousness means, once again, James quotes the *Medicinische Psychologie*. Ideas and feelings are forces that move the body; muscular contractions comply with the ideas. More of Lotze's text is translated by James and included in his text in this regard:

[13] "So sehen wir beim Schreiben oder Clavierspielen eine grosse Menge zum Theil sehr complicierter Bewegungen rasch hintereinander erfolgen, deren vorbildende Vorstellungen kaum einen Moment durch das Bewusstsein gingen, und gewiss nicht lange genug in ihm blieben, um einen andern Willen als den allgemeinen zu erwecken, sich dem Uebergange der Vorstellungen in Bewegungen widerstandslos hinzugeben. Alle die gewöhnlichen Bewegungen unsers alltäglichen Lebens geschehen auf diese Weise; unser Aufstehen, Gehen, Sprechen, alles das erfordert nie besondere Willensimpulse, sondern wird durch den Lauf der Vorstellungen hinlänglich begründet" (Lotze, *Med. Psy.*, 293–294).

> The spectator accompanies the throwing of a billiard-ball, or the thrust of the swordsman, with slight movements of his arm; the untaught narrator tells his story with many gesticulations; the reader while absorbed in the perusal of a battle-scene feels a slight tension run through his muscular system, keeping time as it were with the actions he is reading of. These results become the more marked the more we are absorbed in thinking of the movements which suggest them; they grow fainter exactly in proportion as a complex consciousness, under the dominion of a crowd of other representations, withstands the passing over of mental contemplation into outward action. (PP II, 525, James' translation of Lotze's *Med. Psy.*, 293)[14]

It is therefore fair to argue that James's theory of the ideo-motor action was directly inspired by Lotze's notion of ideas of movement (*Bewegungsvorstellungen*).

In short, their common starting point for exploring any process of volition is the intrinsic impulsive nature of consciousness. James agrees with Lotze on this point. In this respect, the ideomotor action is the most elementary case of volitional process in which the idea immediately moves the body without an intermediate deliberation. The process of volition becomes more complicated when several antagonistic ideas occur in the mind, that might inhibit each other, while still having an impulsive nature.

James also agrees with Lotze on the fact that these higher processes of volition involve additional conscious elements such as consent, fiat and imperative (James, PP II, 526 ff; Lotze, 2017, I, p. 289). Will, therefore, requires a deliberative process through which one representation, among other possibilities, is chosen over others, but it also requires an element of attention

[14] "Eine andere Gruppe, die *Nachahmungsbewegungen*, sehen wir nicht mehr von Gefühlen, sondern von *Bewegungsvorstellungen* ausgehen, auch sie, ohne dass irgend ein bemerkbarer Entschluss des Willens mitthätig wäre. Mit leisen Bewegungen des Armes begleitet der Zuschauende den Wurf der Kegelkugel oder die Stösse des Fechters, mit ausführlichen Gesticulationen der ungebildete Erzähler seine Geschichte; während der andächtigen Lectüre einer Schlachtbeschreibung fühlen wir leise Anspannungen unser Muskelsystem entsprechend den geschilderten Bewegungsmomenten durchziehen. Alle diese Wirkungen erfolgen um so deutlicher, je unbefangener wir uns in die Anschauung der Bewegungen vertiefen; sie nehmen ab in dem Masse, als ein gebildetes Bewusstsein beständig zugleich von einer Mehrzahl anderer Vorstellungen beherrscht wird, die diesem Uebergange der Anschauung in wirkliche Bewegung widerstehen" (Lotze, *Med. Psy.*, p. 293).

that allows the chosen representation to be maintained in the mind (James, PP II, p. 584; Lotze, 2017, I, p. 288). Both Lotze and James are well aware of the "drama of the will" in the selection of an idea activating the physical mechanism. And in this respect, they both uphold the freedom of will.

4. JAMES' CRITIQUE OF ASSOCIATIONISM

James' critique of scientific psychology goes even further, holding that these scientific psychologists "give one nowhere a central point of view, or a deductive or generative principle. They distinguish and refine and specify *in infinitum* without ever getting on to another logical level" (James, PP II, p. 448). They study consciousness by dividing it into smaller and smaller parts, which are, then, combined together in accordance with the laws of association. In this way, scientific psychologists give too much importance to atomic facts and lose the form of consciousness. Ralph Barton Perry, James' pupil, states that:

> James's early and persistent rejection of associationism, in what he called its 'nihilistic' implications, certainly owed something to Lotze, who had distinguished merely external conjunctions from the 'inward kinship' of things that 'belong' together (Perry, 1935, I, p. 586-587).[15]

James explicitly deals with associationism in Chapter 6 of *The Mind-Stuff Theory*, an "exclusively metaphysical" chapter (James, PP I, p. 145). According to the associationist theory, human mind is constituted by a multiplicity of distinct ideas associated in a unit.[16] According to James this is "logically unintelligible" because:

> *All the 'combinations' which we actually know are EFFECTS, wrought by the units said to be 'combined', UPON SOME ENTITY OTHER THAN THEMSELVES*. Without this feature of a medium or vehicle, the notion of

[15] In 1936 Perry won the Pulitzer Prize for biography and autobiography with his biographical book dedicated to his teacher and mentor.

[16] Herbart develops an associationist psychology; see George F. Stout, "The Herbartian Psychology", *Mind* 13, no. 51 (1888): 321–338. Fechner's Psychophysics also defends the Mind-Stuff view.

> combination has no sense. […] In other words, no possible number of entities (call them as you like, whether forces, material particles, or mental elements) can sum *themselves* together. Each remains, in the sum, what it always was; and the sum itself exists only *for a bystander* who happens to overlook the units and to apprehend the sum as such; or else it exists in the shape of some other *effect* on an entity external to the sum itself. (James, PP I, 158–59)

According to James, the human mind is not made of smaller units, as claimed for instance by Fechner's psychophysics—James refers to Fechner as to the "defender of the Mind-Stuff theory"––as the mind's job is to connect the units in a sum or a whole. This idea also comes from Lotze. With regard to Lotze's criticism of associationism in *Medicinische Psychologie*, James states that "Lotze has set forth the truth of this law more clearly and copiously than any other writer" (James, PP I, p. 158–59).

Lotze namely rejects a one-to-one correspondence between body and mind and develops his own psycho-physical mechanism as an original alternative to psychophysics. His understanding of the relationship between mind and body is certainly not logarithmic. Bodily movements are seen as occasions that activate the free production of the human mind. The mind is different in type from the body and their relationship can only be interpreted in an occasionalistic way.[17]

Inspired by Lotze's critique, James argues that, once consciousness is broken down into atomic parts, it is no longer possible to weld them together by means of the laws of association (James, PP I, p. 350-60). Scientific psychology is consequently not able to comprehend the psychological reality such as it is perceived by human beings:

> The traditional psychology talks like one who should say a river consists of nothing but pailsful, spoonsful, quartpotsful, barrelsful, and other moulded forms of water. Even were the pails and the pots all actually standing in the

[17] The example of the lemonade is helpful to understand this difference. Physical lemonade is a sum of units which, as a sum, remain what they always were: lemon and sugar. When we drink lemonade things are completely different. The taste of lemonade is not a sum of the two different tastes of lemon and sugar but is a completely new taste that cannot be reduced to the simple sum of the two tastes. See James, PP I, 158 n.

> stream, still between them the free water would continue to flow. It is just this free water of consciousness that psychologists resolutely overlook. (James, PP I, p. 255)

The psychological reality people directly perceive is a stream of thought; the primary data of consciousness comes to the fore in this form. In short, it can be argued that in the wake of Lotze's critique of associationism in *Medicinische Psychologie*, James could develop his famous concept of the stream of thought (Lotze, *Med. Psy.* 210ff; 2017, I, p. 159-187; 1879, §§ 242).

5. JAMES' RECEPTION OF LOTZE'S THEORY OF LOCAL SIGNS

James also quotes Lotze in Chapter 20 concerning "The Perception of Space". In particular, Lotze's theory of local signs is said to have inspired James' distinction between the object perceived, the bodily (organic) conditions of perception, and the sensations produced (James, PP II, p. 155-166).[18]

According to James, sensation has two parameters. It has a specific *qualia* that radically differs in different sensations; and it has its specific location.[19] In the *Medicinische Psychologie*, Lotze formulates the question of the relationship between quality and locality, or position of sensation. This leads to claim that locality or position has a spatial character that the *qualia* of the sensation cannot have. As James puts it:

> *Can these differences of mere quality in feeling, varying according to locality yet having each sensibly and intrinsically and by itself nothing to do with position, constitute the 'susceptibilities' we mentioned, the conditions of being perceived in position, of the localities to which they belong?* (James, PP II, p. 157)

And, in this respect, he adds:

[18] For a detailed analysis of Lotze's theory of local signs, see: Michele Vagnetti, "Rudolph Hermann Lotze's philosophically informed psychology", *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences* (2023): 1–14; see James, PP I, 521n–523n.

[19] According to James, the sensations have their specific *qualia* that differs from the *qualia* of another sensation and they (the sensations) are felt *where* they belong.

> Lotze, who in his *Medizinische Psychologie* first described the sensations in this way, designating them, thus conceived, as *local-signs*. This term has obtained wide currency in Germany, and *in speaking of the* 'LOCAL-SIGN THEORY' *hereafter, I shall always mean the theory which denies that there can be in a sensation any element of actual locality, of inherent spatial order*, any tone as it were which cries to us immediately and without further ado, 'I am *here*', or 'I am *there*'. If, as may well be the case, we by this time find ourselves tempted to accept the Local-sign theory in a general way, we have to clear up several farther matters. […] *The sign is a quality of feeling and the thing is a position*. (James, PP II, p. 157–58)

According to Lotze, additional sensations (*Nebenempfindungen*) are signs or hints that, in themselves, are not spatial; these signs are occasions which the mind orders spatially. Space is extrinsic and supplementary to sensation. In conclusion, Lotze postulates the existence of an innate mind activity which orders the various sensations in spatial series. James (PP II, p. 275-276) rejects this idea and argues that extensity is given directly in sensation itself. In this respect, James also claims that Lotze, in his *Medicinische Psychologie*, is "a strong defender of the Soul-Substance theory". But he also adds that Lotze is much more than that, inasmuch he "has written in §§ 243–5 of his *Metaphysik* the most beautiful criticism of this theory [Soul-Substance theory] which exists" (James, PP I, 349n). These passages then reveal some difficulties connected to interpreting Lotze's philosophy. In short, James replaces the atomistic sensation with a stimulated sensation, in which the extensity of the stimulus was given directly without the need for the mind's mediation (Woodward, 2015, p. 225).

6. LOTZE'S INFLUENCE ON JAMES' THEORY OF EMOTIONS

As abundantly pointed out by Kraushaar in the late 1930s and early 1940s,[20] many similarities can be detected between Lotze's and James' theory of

[20] See Kraushaar, "Lotze's Influence on the Psychology of William James", 250: "In spite of the absence of acknowledgment on the part of James, the striking similarity of the two doctrines, plus the herein established fact of James' knowledge of Lotze's exposition, leads irresistibly to the conclusion that Lotze was one of the great formative influences in James' theory of the emotions. James' position is, in fact, simply a restatement of the Lotzean one, but more clear, incisive and radical; where in Lotze's view the organic responses are still for the most part only contributory to the emotion, for James they become actually constitutive of it. Also, James

emotions. Indeed, both thinkers consider emotions as developing according to a cause-and-effect pattern; there is no special brain-centre for emotions[21]—the reason is that the latter develop from the peripheral nervous activity; both authors also share the idea that our body is a "sounding-board" for mental states.[22]

Lotze argues that there is a physiological mechanism for the development of emotions and that the organs and their functions produce emotions. Furthermore, the intensity of an emotion can be directly affected by the kind of body movement, the number of anatomical elements involved, and the movement of joints and muscles. On this ground, Lotze rejects the existence of a central and separated organ for the mental manifestations of emotions. On this matter, Lotze writes:

> We believe one should look for further and most important explanation of mental functions not really in the *central organs*, but much more in the *peripheral organs* and in their *functions*. (Lotze, *Med. Psy*., p. 554, my transl., emphasis in the original) [23]

One should also add that, according to Lotze's *Medicinische Psychologie*, bodily changes––such as the oscillations of the central organs––are the "effects" of a mental stream of ideas, a mental cognition which is their "cause". As Lotze puts it:

> And in this way weak joint oscillations of central organs can accompany everywhere the course of psychic representation [mental states], not as its cause, but as its consequence, as some sort of resonance, which the activity of the soul arouses in the material substrates [body] as a secondary reinforcement of the vitality of its representations. (Lotze, *Med. Psy*., p. 474, my transl.)

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supports his position with evidence from introspection and pathology of which Lotze had been quite innocent".

[21] A century later, in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), Ludwig Wittgenstein produced a similar argument. There is no special centre of language or of calculi in the brain.

[22] In his *Medicinische Psychologie*, Lotze uses repeatedly uses the terms *Resonanz*, *Resonanzboden*, and *Resonanzkörper* (see *Med. Psy*., p. 109; p. 183; p. 224; p. 474; p. 480; p. 485).

[23] Cf. *Med. Psy*., 257 ff.

In other words, one could say that mental states (cause) generate body movements (effect), because the body functions as the sounding-board of the mind.

In his somatic theory of emotions, presented in 1884 in an article published on *Mind* (old series) James follows Lotze quite closely. The following year (1885), also the Danish physiologist Carl Georg Lange developed, independently from his American colleague, a somatic theory of emotions.[24] James claims that the cause of emotion is not something mental, such as grief or rage, but a somatic and physiological phenomenon—tears, heart-beat, blood pressure, breathing, etc. However, he is careful to clarify that his somatic theory of emotions should not be understood in materialistic terms, inasmuch as

> Our emotions must always be *inwardly* what they are, whatever be the physiological ground of their apparition. If they are deep, pure, worthy, spiritual facts on any conceivable theory of their physiological source, they remain no less deep, pure, spiritual and worthy of regard on this present sensational theory. […] If such a theory is true, then each emotion is the resultant of a sum of elements, and each element is caused by a physiological process of a sort already well known. The elements are all organic changes, and each of them is the reflex effect of the exciting objects. (James, PP II, p. 453)

James' somatic theory of emotions holds that the perception of exciting facts can produce bodily changes as its effect. These bodily changes are the "general causes" of emotions. James further clarifies that "*the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS the emotion*" (James, PP II, p. 449).

This view contrasts the common-sense theory of emotion which assumes that the perception of the exciting facts causes in us the corresponding emotion (mental state) and the latter causes in us the physical change (physiological plane). At variance with these ideas, James claims that:

[24] James states that: "Prof. C. Lange, of Copenhagen, in the pamphlet from which I have already quoted, published in 1885 a physiological theory of their [of emotion] constitution and conditioning, which I had already broached the previous year in an article in Mind". (James, PP II, p. 449).

> Common-sense says, we lose our fortune, are sorry and weep; we meet a bear, are frightened and run; we are insulted by a rival, are angry and strike. The hypothesis here to be defended says that this order of sequence is incorrect, that the one mental state is not immediately induced by the other, that the bodily manifestations must first be interposed between, and that the more rational statement is that we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble, and not that we cry, strike, or tremble, because we are sorry, angry or fearful, as the case may be. Without the bodily states following on the perception, the latter would be purely cognitive in form, pale, colorless, destitute of emotional warmth. We might then see the bear, and judge it best to run, receive the insult and deem it right to strike, but we should not actually *feel* afraid or angry. (James, PP II, p. 449–50)

According to common-sense, the emotion is the second step of the sequence, whereas the physical change is the third. This means that an emotion is theoretically a mental state separated from the physiological plane that it causes. In contrast, according to James, the separation between emotion and bodily changes is "inconceivable". A purely disembodied emotion is a "nonentity". Emotion is bodily and cannot be relegated to a purely "intellectual realm" (James, PP II, p. 452). James further claims that:

> I now proceed to urge the vital point of my whole theory, which is this: *If we fancy some strong emotion, and then try to abstract from our consciousness of it all the feelings of its bodily symptoms, we find we have nothing left behind*, no 'mind-stuff' out of which the emotion can be constituted, and that a cold and neutral state of intellectual perception is all that remains. (James, PP II, p. 451)

The somatic theory of emotions suggests a different sequence giving rise to emotions. The perception of the exciting fact causes an instinctive reaction of the body, which, next, causes the emotion. In other words, this instinctive reaction consists of reflex movements that generate a certain feeling in us. This feeling is the emotion. According to James, there is a coexistence between bodily perturbation and subjective feeling. As James puts it:

> To begin with, no reader of the last two chapters will be inclined to doubt the fact that *objects do excite bodily changes* by a preorganized mechanism, or the farther fact that *the changes are so indefinitely numerous and subtle that the*

> *entire organism may be called a sounding-board*, which every change of consciousness, however slight, may make reverberate. (James, PP II, p. 450)

Another similarity to Lotze's perspective consists in rejecting the existence of a special brain-centre for emotions (Lotze, *Med. Psy.* 257ff; p. 554). The physiological basis of emotions simply consists of incoming nerve currents, muscles and skin; nothing more needs to be postulated. As James puts it:

> An object falls on a sense-organ, affects a cortical part, and is perceived; or else the latter, excited inwardly, gives rise to an idea of the same object. Quick as a flash, the reflex currents pass down through their preordained channels, alter the condition of muscle, skin, and viscus; and these alterations, perceived, like the original object, in as many portions of the cortex, combine with it in consciousness and transform it from an object-simply-apprehended into an object-emotionally-felt. No new principles have to be invoked, nothing postulated beyond the ordinary reflex circuits, and the local centres admitted in one shape or another by all to exist. (James, PP II, p. 473–74)

7. LOTZE AND JAMES'S PRAGMATISM

Besides his close reading of Lotze's *Medicinische Psychologie* and *Mikrokosmos*, James also shows interest for his "greater" *Metaphysik*[25] and "greater" *Logik* (1874). These can be seen as having contributed to the further development of James' pragmatism. From Lotze's insights, James takes notably two key ideas: (i) perceptions, judgments, and beliefs have their own content, and (ii) the primacy of practical reason over theoretical reason.

(i) On the margins of James' personal copy of Lotze's *Logik*, one can find numerous handwritten annotations, which help us identify key points of agreement (Woodward, 2015, p. 364-365). James can be seen embracing Lotze's

[25] On September 8, 1879, William James wrote: "This summer I've read about a half of Lotze's *Metaphysik*. He is the most delectable, certainly, of all German writers—a pure genius". See: Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, II,16; and Milkov, "Lotze and the Early Cambridge Analytic Philosophy", 133. In an 1881 letter, James wrote: "[Lotze] seems to me the most exquisite of contemporary minds". (William James, *The Correspondence of William James*, ed. Ignas K. Skrupskelis, Elizabeth M. Berkeley (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), vol. 5: 1878–1884, p. 181). Lotze was also described by James as the "deepest philosopher" of the day (see Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, I, p. 586).

critique of the correspondence between logical act and logical content as well as his critique of associationism. Judgement is no longer considered as a mere association of ideas, but as a relation of contents of thought. Quoting Lotze, James warns against the psychologist fallacy: "What we experience, what *comes before us*, is a chaos of fragmentary impressions interrupting each other; what we *think* is an abstract system of hypothetical data and laws" (PP II, 634–35). The thinking mind is not content to receive and accept the fragmentary nature of the representations offered to us by experience but sifts and connects them according to a nexus of mutual inherence. There must be no confusion between these two levels (i.e. experience and thinking); they must remain quite distinct.

As early as 1879, in an essay entitled "The Sentiment of Rationality", James writes that the activity of thought consists in transforming what merely coexists in the flux of impressions into something coherent that rises above the level of mere association of representations. Our thinking is not satisfied with merely associated representations, but in its constant critical and synthetic activity it refers every representation back to the rational ground. The process of thinking is likened by Lotze to the scaffolding (*Lehrgerüst*) used in the construction of a building, which becomes useless once the building is completed (Lotze, *Logic*, p. 7). Much of the conceptual apparatus used in thinking has only instrumental value. The cognitive process begins with the establishment of the datum and the attempt to frame it in conceptual structures, in "scaffolding", from which the datum, once focused in its independent and in some sense timeless value, is then liberated. James can be seen picking up on this image. In an unfinished article on Kant, for instance, James acknowledges the existence of mental structures, but at the same time carefully emphasizes that the congruence between nature and mental structures is always a laboriously achieved compromise. A large part of these mental structures must be discarded after they have served their purpose.

(ii) Lotze and James also agree on the idea that practical reason has primacy over theoretical reason. Key principle in German philosophy after

Kant, Lotze brings this idea possibly even further. Otto F. Kraushaar (1940, p. 446) claims that Lotze defends practical reason by asserting the priority not only of formal principles but also of values. This is an invitation on Lotze's part to replace the abstractness of Kantian philosophy with the anthropological concreteness of the socio-historical contexts in which embodied human beings are situated. According to Lotze, only from this perspective is it possible to grasp the depth and significance of metaphysical problems. William James follows in the same approach.

Lotze and James both support the validity of spiritual experience against the growing acceptance of mechanistic principles. Neither understands philosophy as a dispassionate search for absolute truth.[26] Philosophy is instead seen as an attempt to understand the problem of human life and its destiny; the stimulus to philosophy arises in response to the need to regulate the various intellectual and scientific, aesthetic, moral, and religious impulses of the human mind. The whole *Mikrokosmos* is a constant attempt to reconcile the demands of morality, religion, and aesthetics with those of scientific research and its discoveries, without, however, in any way signifying adherence to forms of sceptical relativism. James and Lotze take a clear position in favour of the primacy of practical reason. Lotze's basic belief that it is impossible for the human mind to accept not only what is contradictory, what is unthinkable, but also what conflicts with our moral and aesthetic presuppositions is matched by James' similar idea that all formulations about the nature of the world that are incompatible with our deep-rooted, almost instinctive moral demands must necessarily be eliminated. There is a clear convergence between the two thinkers in their belief that it is the whole mind, with its moral and aesthetic intuitions, that is the supreme criterion of truth: a criterion more profound and cogent than the stable complying to the laws of logic.

[26] There is a clear difference between the method of Lotze and James on the one hand and that of Hegel on the other.

The agreement of both thinkers on the principle of the primacy of practical reason explains why both Lotze and James are not attracted to Hegel's philosophy. The primacy of practical reason underlies what is widely referred to as Lotze's anti-intellectualism. This anti-intellectualism is accompanied by an open hostility to the Hegelian method. This finds a very clear echo in James. Criticized by Lotze for identifying thought and reality, logic and metaphysics, Hegel is seen by James as exemplifying the danger inherent in any monistic intellectualism. From Lotze James also inherits a hostility for the excessive determinism and intellectualism of Hegelian philosophy, as expressed in important articles such as "On Some Hegelisms" and "Hegel and his Method"(James, 1909, Lecture 3; James, 1956, p. 263-298). Both publications target Hegel's panlogism and build on Lotze's critique of it.

CONCLUSIONS

By way of summary, it can be said that Lotze's insights can be found at work in some of the most distinctive features of James' psychology and pragmatism. Key chapters in *The Principles of Psychology* are interspersed with quotations from Lotze's *Medicinische Psychologie* and Lotze's contributions to Wagner's *Handwörterbuch*. [27] Lotze's influence on James' psychology and pragmatism can be best appreciated concerning his understanding of the role and scope of psychology and of the scientific study of the mind, the critique of associationism, the theory of local signs and the theory of emotions, the afferent interpretation of muscular feeling, the ideomotor action as the simplest form of voluntary action, the idea that perceptions, judgments, and beliefs have their own content, the principle of the primacy of practical reason over theoretical reason, and the rejection of the Hegelian philosophical method.

[27] See two important contributions by Lotze to R. Wagner's *Handwörterbuch der Physiologie*: "Leben und Lebenskraft" and "Seele und Seelenleben", republished in Rudolph Hermann Lotze, *Kleine Schriften*, ed. David Peipers (Leipzig: Hirzel 1885–1891): Lotze, "Leben. Lebenskraft" in *KS*, 1, 139–220; Lotze, "Seele und Seelenleben" in *KS*, 2, 1–204.

Furthermore, there are reasons to believe that one of the most distinctive philosophical principles James is known for, namely the primacy of practical reason over theoretical reason, with all its aftermath in American philosophy, is clearly inspired by Lotze. Lotze notably argues that logical laws, that is, the principles that guarantee the formulation of judgments and guide the organization and development of our knowledge, are based on practical reason. This latter alone exercises a fundamental and unifying function. Several, subtle but persistent, threads bind William James' pragmatism to Lotze's philosophy. It seems no exaggeration then to claim that such a 'continental' thinker like Rudolph Hermann Lotze has inspired the birth and maturation of one of the most influential American philosophical movements of the entire twentieth century.

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