

HOW DOES CONSCIOUSNESS EXIST?
A COMPARATIVE INQUIRY ON CLASSICAL EMPIRICISM
AND WILLIAM JAMES

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ZELİHA BURCU YILMAZ

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Prof. Dr. Sencer Ayata
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts of Philosophy.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Elif Çırakman
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assist. Prof. Dr. Elif Çırakman (METU, PHIL) _____
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Halil Ş. Turan (METU, PHIL) _____
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Murat Baç (Boğaziçi U., PHIL) _____

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ABSTRACT

HOW DOES CONSCIOUSNESS EXIST? A COMPARATIVE INQUIRY ON CLASSICAL EMPIRICISM AND WILLIAM JAMES

Yılmaz, Zeliha Burcu

Master of Arts in Department of Philosophy

Supervisor : Assist. Prof. Dr. Elif Çırakman

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William James denies consciousness as an entity and this rejection lies in the background of my thesis. I searched the main reasons for this rejection in his philosophy. Throughout this search, I perceived two modes of existence of consciousness, that active and passive. As James improves his thoughts on consciousness over the main arguments of classical empiricists, I explained his radical empiricism and pragmatism in relation to them. It is difficult to answer whether we are completely active or passive in the ways of our thinking and behaving. However, although it includes some problems and inconsistencies, James's philosophy presents a more plausible explanation of our thinking than rationalism and empiricism, since it can appreciate the changes of our life in an unfinished world of pure experience. Therefore, my inquiry into the existence of consciousness in James depends on this plausibility of the main characteristics of radical empiricism in connection with the classical empiricists.

Key words: Consciousness, radical empiricism, pragmatism, classical empiricism, experience, reasoning, sensation, reflection, perception, knowledge, truth, solipsism, realism, existence, reality.

ÖZ

BİLİNÇ NASIL VAR OLUR? KLASİK EMPİRİSİZM VE WILLIAM JAMES ÜZERİNE KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR İNCELEME

Yılmaz, Zeliha Burcu

Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Bölümü

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William James bilinci bir varlık olarak reddeder ve bu tezin arkaplanında bu reddediş vardır. James felsefesinde bu reddedişin temel nedenlerini araştırdım. Bu inceleme süresince, onun düşüncesinde bilincin etkin ve edilgin olarak iki varoluş biçimi olduğunu gözlemledim. James bilinç üzerine düşüncelerini klasik deneycilerin temel iddiaları üzerine geliştirdiği için, onun radikal deneyciliğini ve pragmatizmini klasik deneycilikle ilişkisi içerisinde açıkladım. Düşüncelerimizde ve hareketlerimizde tamamen etkin ya da edilgin olup olmadığımızı yanıt vermek güçtür. Ama bazı sorunlar ve tutarsızlıklar içerse de, James'in felsefesi düşüncemize dair usçuluk ve deneycilikten daha akla yatkın bir açıklama sunmaktadır, çünkü James'in yaklaşımı henüz tamamlanmamış bir saf deneyim dünyasında hayatımızdaki değişiklikleri daha iyi karşılayabilir. Sonuç olarak James'teki bilince dair olan tezim bu akla yatkınlığa ve klasik deneycilikle ilişkisi içinde radikal deneyciliğin temel ilkelerinin ikna edici gücüne dayanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bilinç, radikal deneycilik, pragmatizm, klasik deneycilik, deneyim, uslamlama, duyum, düşünüm, bilgi, doğru, tekbencilik, gerçekçilik, varolmak, gerçeklik.

To My Mother

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

How knowledge is constructed and how we can get true knowledge are the essential problems of philosophy. History of philosophy is the history of comprehensive and original solutions to these questions. Empiricism and rationalism are two conventional theories focusing on this issue. The American pragmatist William James attempted to answer these questions by his radical empiricism. He is against the notion of absolute entity in philosophy and he aims at reducing all our concepts and abstractions to their empirical roots. Pragmatic method supports this aim in the sense that it presents us a means of testing the meanings of our concepts; by asking “what sensible difference to anybody will its truth make?”¹ For James, by pursuing this question, we can check all our concepts and define their meanings. This checking process stresses upon that no concept has an absolute meaning. For that reason, if we take philosophical problems from different perspectives and in terms of their “sensible differences”, we can see that their meanings are changeable. Thus, there cannot be any absolute difference between competing theories that exhibit no practical differences.

Consciousness is one of the concepts that James tries to explicate by his radical empiricism and pragmatic method. In his explanations, it sometimes has a passive role in knowing, and sometimes it is so active. There lies an important purpose in the setting of James’s accounts of consciousness. He does not think that mind or consciousness is superior in the process of knowing like rationalists. Additionally, he does not hold a strict empiricist position accepting that consciousness is passive in knowing and all our knowing depend on sense experience, either. As an

¹ William James, *Some Problems of Philosophy*, p. 37.

alternative to these epistemologies, he improves his radical empiricism. It is closely associated with empiricist attitude. However, James states that empiricists cannot demonstrate that all our knowledge come from experience. It is acknowledged that there are some problems in classical empiricists on this issue. They also believe in the abstract faculties of reasoning or understanding. James is against any abstractions and he tries to explain every notion in philosophy within experience. Therefore, the main goal of my thesis is to explore his conceptions of consciousness portrayed in his radical empiricism and pragmatism. I shall elaborate the passive and the active modes of consciousness depending on the differences between classical empiricism and radical empiricism.

Radical empiricism and pragmatism are the two labels that James uses to define his philosophy. However, to conceive these two perspectives together is not a simple task at some points. While pragmatism “lies in the midst of all theories like a corridor in a hotel”² radical empiricism is open to a new metaphysics. According to James’s explications, pragmatism has no meaning other than its being only a method. Yet, sometimes James’s pragmatism passes further its neutral meaning.³ James presents his pragmatism as a method dissolving some problems of philosophy by considering the practical consequences they lead. In this sense, pragmatism must have a neutral meaning, and so it cannot be an epistemological theory. Nevertheless, James is also the exponent of radical empiricism which has some epistemological significance and is associated with a new theory of metaphysics “refusing the hypothesis of trans-empirical reality.”⁴ In fact, William James pursues the goal of making empiricism radical, which is one of the chief purposes of his thinking. This aim is attached with his conception of consciousness also.

² James, *Pragmatism*, p. 47.

³ Ellen K. Suckiel, *The Pragmatic Philosophy of William James*, p. 14.

⁴ William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, p. 195.

In the philosophy of William James, consciousness has two roles, one of them is active and the other is passive. In other words, he regards consciousness both as a stream of thought that has no center of control and as a selective creator of reality. We find the origin of this view in his *Principles of Psychology*. Later this view of consciousness is approached from the perspective of radical empiricism supported by the method of pragmatism. To make empiricism radical James denies the existence of consciousness as an entity. He argues that “to be conscious of something” means the reporting the existence of something. Therefore, our cognition cannot imply any existence and we cannot find any ground of its being in pure experience. James claims that experience has no such duplicity of thing and thought; since it is immediate and pure, and in its immediacy we cannot find any foundation for consciousness. On the other hand, the act of reporting and the cognitive mediation needs some explanations, since it is hard to explain “to be conscious of something” in pure experience. In this sense, while he rejects within the framework of his radical empiricism, he also gives some important roles to it. Thus, the problematic existence of consciousness can be seen in both *Principles of Psychology* and *Essays in Radical Empiricism*.

The concept of the field of consciousness is so significant in James’s theory that his initial project is to underline that consciousness is a stream. His approach to the problem of consciousness is important in the sense that he gives an original solution to the puzzle of thinking and decision making. To reject its entitative and static existence is the essential part of his thinking. Accordingly, I shall examine the way in which James makes empiricism radical, and the way he contributes classical empiricism, by focusing on his conception of consciousness. I think that radical empiricism and pragmatism are deeply related to James’s conception of consciousness. In this thesis, I shall evaluate the ambiguity I find at the heart of James’s view of consciousness, which arises when he considers consciousness as both active and passive. Furthermore, this problem is linked with a classical

problem about the mind-body dualism, and the difference between empiricism and rationalism. James explicates his philosophy as if it is a temporary solution to these classical problems, but at the same time, his solution may provide a new theory of reality and knowledge. Moreover, I shall question how consciousness can be active in a radically empiricist philosophy, or in other words, my question would be whether we could define consciousness by relying completely on empirical resources and on empiricist premises. This question will be deepened when we compare and contrast James's radical empiricism and classical empiricist philosophies. According to radical empiricism, experiencability is the main criteria for reality, and all relations are real as things and facts.⁵ On the one hand, consciousness is an important component of experiences and the relations of experience. In this regard, it serves an indispensable function for James, which is "knowing". On the other hand, James's pragmatism rejects all static entities, and consciousness is one of the concepts that James wants to decenter and dissolve by relying on his pragmatic method and his radically empiricist world-view. If we explain the function of knowing in experience, we can completely remove the concept of consciousness as an entity from philosophy. James points out that the only possible solution to the age-old mind-body dualism, or the dualism of thoughts and things, resides in viewing the pragmatic implications of these philosophical concepts by assuming a radical empiricist world-view.

To establish a relation between mind and body, that is the heritage of Descartes, has been one of the chief problems in modern philosophy. The predecessors of Descartes used the term of consciousness only as a bearer of knowledge and inner states;⁶ with Descartes philosophy has come into a new period, in which consciousness has gained more important role in the process of knowledge. In the first part of *Meditations*, Descartes holds that even if all our senses were deceived

⁵ James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, p. 42.

⁶ Eric, Lordman "Consciousness", for the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

there would remain something called ‘myself’.⁷ This ‘myself’ can be accepted as the first implication of consciousness in the history of philosophy. On the other hand, according to Thayer, if Descartes is the father of modernism there should be ‘a mother’ of it also.⁸ Additionally Thayer suggests that Platonism, Augustinian Christianity, the emerging mathematical science in Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo can be accepted as ‘the mother’ of modernism. Consequently, Descartes under the influence of these developments and thinkers, brought forth these questions in philosophy; ‘are there external real things?’ and ‘if there are, can we know anything about them?’⁹ In connection with these questions, consciousness has become an important matter in philosophy.

Consciousness, the ‘I’ or the self can be defined as subjective states or awareness that are caused by lower biological processes in the brain.¹⁰ This definition of John Searle is compatible with James’s theory, since James also gives a detailed investigation of brain processes in order to explain our behaviors, thoughts and sensations in his *Principle of Psychology*. However, a complete investigation of all processes of our brain is difficult, because it is difficult to determine the causal relations between the parts of our brain and our behaviors and thoughts. James also argues that such an explanation is not accomplished yet in his book. By the examination of neurobiological processes of the brain, we can answer most of the questions concerning our emotions, depressions, thoughts and beliefs. Clarifying these states of our nature helps us to face many problems and confusions in philosophy. Therefore, this research is productive and important, given that William James who has tackled with this problem is a pivotal thinker in the disciplines of philosophy, physiology and psychology.

⁷ Rene, Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, from Meditation I.

⁸ H. S. Thayer, *Meaning and Action*, p. 16.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 21.

¹⁰ John, Searle, “The Problem of Consciousness”, In *Minds*, p. 417.

The intriguing relation between consciousness and knowledge has captured many philosophers' attention. Empiricism and rationalism are the main theories to explain the construction of knowledge. The former explains the construction of knowledge by giving an important role to the experience and the latter gives more important role to the intellect. James argues that the distinction between empiricism and rationalism depends on the different temperaments of philosophers. He states that "the rationalist finally will be of dogmatic temper in his affirmations, while the empiricist may be more skeptical and open to discussion."¹¹ Remarking on the skeptical point of empiricism, he entitles his theory as 'radical empiricism'. However, different from the general understanding of empiricism, James denies the argument that knowledge comes from external world and mind has not got a significant role in the process of knowing. Instead of this classical empiricist approach, James argues that we can directly experience relationships between things. Furthermore, he thinks that we can define only things that are derived from experience.¹² Thus, we cannot isolate exactly the thing from the relations of it. Therefore, we cannot subtract our consciousness from the relations and we cannot be out of these relations in the process of knowing. Consequently, consciousness, knowledge and the objects of external world cannot be separated from each other, so consciousness cannot be an entity, which can produce knowledge.¹³

In *Principles*, James states that thought is continuous and each thought results from the stream of consciousness.¹⁴ Instead of considering knowledge and consciousness as separate entities, James prefers to explain the function of consciousness by means of a stream of thought. Actually, the challenge that James makes to the

¹¹ James, *Essays*, p. 4.

¹² James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, pp. 159-160.

¹³ *Ibid*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁴ James, *Principles of Psychology*, "The Stream of Thought" is one of the ninth chapter of the first volume.

explanation of consciousness is that it must be estimated as a flux of experience and not as a producer of knowledge, thought or feeling. For him, knowledge can be defined due to its consequences in this flux of experience. That is to say, our ways of thinking, feeling and knowing have grown to be what they are because of their utility in shaping our reactions to the outer world.¹⁵ In this regard, pragmatism contributes his understanding of knowledge and consciousness.

The reconciling function of pragmatism lies in the idea that ‘no dogmas and no doctrines save its method’.¹⁶ Pragmatic method is ‘the attitude of looking away from first things, principles, categories, and supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts’.¹⁷ Hence, we can say that there is no need of Descartes’ principles in *Meditations* or Kant’s transcendental categories of mind; since pragmatism considers only the consequences of philosophical theories. Theories cannot present absolute solutions for our reasoning. In fact, they are only “become instruments, not answers to enigmas, in which we can rest”.¹⁸ In addition to this, the special notions of theories are only ‘solving names’ for James.¹⁹ He summarizes his theory by saying that ‘to a certain degree, everything here is a plastic’.²⁰ In this manner, he wants to remove all static entities from the realm of philosophy. Lastly, consciousness is one of the notions that he wants to remove and in order to do it he claims that it is a process rather than an entity.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 224-290.

¹⁶ James, *Pragmatism*, p. 47.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 47.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 57.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 47.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 51.

Accordingly, this approach to consciousness is the main reason why I want to study James's philosophy, since consideration of consciousness as a process is an important change in philosophy. This argument brings forth an important philosophical implication; neither things nor the ideas of those things have separate existences. We can think about only 'pure experience' that encompasses all mental and physical things. Feelings, thoughts, knowledge, things and facts in the external world can only be expressed by means of their relations to pure experience. According to James, the realm of consciousness and the realm of external world can only be expressed by means of such relations.²¹

In "Does Consciousness Exist?", James states a more radical claim that consciousness must be totally removed from the domain of philosophy. In this article, James presents a definition of pure experience that encompasses all mental and physical things. Knowledge can be explained as particular sorts of relations towards one another into which pure experience may enter.²² "The relation is a part of pure experience. One of its terms becomes the subject or bearer of knowledge, the knower; the other becomes the object known."²³ There is a function in experience that thoughts perform. James calls this function as knowing and his main goal is to explain this function without assuming consciousness as an entity. Beyond the relations of pure experience, there is no ground for a static entity, such as consciousness or its object.

To be brief, the problem of the source of knowledge cannot be the main concern of James, since consciousness, conscious states and the things known are explained in the relations of pure experience. There is a flux of experience and human beings

²¹ James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, pp. 4-9.

²² *Ibid*, pp. 4-9.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 52.

conduct them due to their 'demand' and 'interest'.²⁴ Besides, knowledge cannot be separated totally from this process and we should only search for knowledge in the flux of experience. Because of the reasons stated above it is clear that James has a different understanding of establishment of knowledge, and the relation between knowledge and the role of consciousness.

James's pragmatic conception of truth could be understood in the context of the relation between knowledge and his conception of consciousness. In addition to the pragmatic concept of truth, there are two classical theories of truth in philosophy that is correspondence and coherence theories. James introduces his theory in order to solve old metaphysical problems of philosophy and provide a mediator to exemplify the essential characteristics of truth between other theories.²⁵

Correspondence theory of truth is based on the assumption that there must be a correspondence between the ideas or propositions and the facts. Moreover, correspondence may be accepted as the structural similarity between the ideas and facts of those ideas.²⁶ According to this theory, our propositions are true as far as they correspond to facts independent from our mind. As for coherence theory, it presupposes a coherency between our propositions and it claims that the truthness of our arguments is dependent on this coherency. James's objection to both these theories is that they have a groundless metaphysical understanding of absolute reality. The main argument of James concerning those theories is that they give priority to truth; however according to him truth can be determined only in the realm of experience. There is no absolute truth. Truth is determined by the conditions of subject and object. The pragmatic theory of truth is the sixth chapter of *Pragmatism*. Truths "lead us into useful verbal and conceptual quarters as well

²⁴ James, *Principles of Psychology*, from the "Stream of Thought".

²⁵ James, *Pragmatism*, p. 28.

²⁶ John Locke, *Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, 4, 5, Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.

as directly up to useful sensible termini. They lead to consistency, stability and flowing human intercourse. They lead away from eccentricity and isolation, from foiled and barren thinking.”²⁷ James holds that truths are ‘made’ in the course of human experience; yet although they live for the most part ‘on credit system’ in that they are not currently being verified by most of those who have them, ‘beliefs verified concretely by somebody are the posts of the whole superstructure’.²⁸ In his article of ‘Pragmatism and the Revolt Against Formalism: Revising Some Doctrines of William James’, Morton White argued that in order to interpret James’ doctrine of truth exactly, the emphasis would be on the assumption that James mentions truth only as the ‘marriage function’ of linking the stock of older truths with novel experience.²⁹ Consequently, I shall claim that James does not insist upon a definite conception of truth, and he only conceives truth as a means of overcoming troubles that impede our way of adaptation and surviving.

James’s argument that pragmatism is at the core of all other theories is significant, since he thinks that this method is used in philosophy since the ancient times. All philosophical theories and all truths can be considered by means of this method. I think that this claim is important and I shall emphasize the importance of this method and its relations and differences from other theories in my thesis.

Upon the whole arguments, the problems of classical empiricism shall be the subject matter of the second chapter of my thesis. In explaining these problems I shall also consider the active and passive modes of consciousness or mind in classical empiricists, since these points constitute the main problem of my thesis. I aim at examining James’s interpretations concerning the empiricists of seventeenth century in terms of the existence of consciousness, so my explications of classical

²⁷ James, *Pragmatism*, p.104.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 137.

²⁹ Morton White, “Pragmatism and Revolt against Formalism: Revising Some Doctrines of William James”, p. 8.

empiricism shall be connected with consciousness as well.

In the third chapter of my thesis, I shall examine James's theory of consciousness by stressing upon the different modes of consciousness. Firstly, I shall elucidate "stream of thought" in *Principles*, and in the second part, I shall take the problem of rejecting the existence of consciousness as an entity his radical empiricism. I think that both writings of James have some similarities and keep the same tension between passive and active modes of consciousness. James's approach to this problem shall be examined within two different perspectives in this chapter. In addition, around these questions the relation between radical empiricism and pragmatism shall be considered, since, as I explained before, the difference between theories has some important implications in terms of the conceptions of consciousness.

Approaching to the problems of classical empiricism from James's radical empiricism and pragmatism is the title of the fourth chapter of my thesis. In elaborating James's interpretations, I shall consider the critical points of classical empiricists. The problem about the existence of consciousness plays an important role in these interpretations, and I shall consider James's understanding of classical empiricism at this point. Throughout this study, I propose to give an examination of James's conception of consciousness. However, this thesis does not aim at being a thesis of philosophy of mind. Instead of the problems in philosophy of mind, I shall be interested in the various approaches of James in dealing with the problem of consciousness by taking into account his early writings in *Principles of Psychology* and his later approach displayed in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. Thus, how James's two approaches to the problem of consciousness can stand together in his philosophy and the relation of this question with his radical empiricism are the main questions of this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROBLEMS OF CLASSICAL EMPIRICISM

John Locke, George Berkeley and David Hume are important classical empiricists of seventeenth century. Though their starting points differ and they use some crucial notions in different contexts, they all try to explain knowledge dependent mostly on experience. The starting point of their thinking is different in the sense that they write with their distinct aims in mind. Locke, in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, explains the process of how knowledge is built on its empirical roots and how reason and experience operate in that process.³⁰ His particular concern is to reject innate ideas, which he views as the basis for all rationalistic description of knowledge. He perceives innate ideas as the main contribution of reason to our knowledge and sees them as the main instrument of rationalists. He does want to explicate this contribution without any act of mind. In this sense, his rejection of innate ideas is not a reaction to the capacity of our reasoning; in fact he only wants to refuse the argument that we can have ideas without any act of human mind. In other words, he avoids a static conception of mind that has some ideas imprinted on and he sees this explanation as the only way of constructing an empiricist philosophy.

³⁰ Elliot D. Cohen, "Reason and Experience in Locke's Epistemology". There are many different arguments that elaborate the epistemological standpoint of Locke. D. J. O'Connor argues that both rationalist and empiricist elements can be found in his philosophy and these elements cannot be reconciled (*John Locke*). On the other hand, Richard Aaron admitted these different parts of Locke's philosophy as consistent (*John Locke*). As for Elliot D. Cohen, Locke's intention "is not weigh experience against reason to determine which is of greater epistemic difference". For Cohen, Locke's purpose is to demonstrate "how reason and experience both contribute their essential shares to human knowledge".

Berkeley's concern, on the other hand, is the problem of existence, as he stated in his books *A Treatise Concerning Human Knowledge* and *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*. Rather than how experience operates in knowledge, he tries to clarify the meaning of existence at first. He perceives the existence of God as standing above all other existence and he takes universe as a being consisting of God's ideas. The perception of God is so wide and sublime that embraces everything in the universe. God's perception brings into the existence of everything. The emphasis of perception in Berkeley is so much important that the main principle of his philosophy is "to be is to be perceived". Furthermore, this point is connected with his empiricism, in the sense that he wants to remove all knowledge that does not come from experience. That is, our perceptions come from experience and we cannot acknowledge the existence of something beyond them. This argument is the main sign of his empiricism. By doing this, he tries to make all knowledge to be dependent solely on experience. Accordingly, to establish an empiricist philosophy via the principle of "to be is to be perceived" and to demonstrate God's existence and its sublime perceptions are the main arguments of Berkeley's thinking.

David Hume, who is the last empiricists of seventeenth century, "repeats, improves and strengthens Locke's position."³¹ While Locke examines the objects of human knowledge upon the notion of idea, Hume argues that "all objects of human knowledge may naturally be divided into two kinds, relations of ideas and matters of facts."³² The first kind includes the propositions of geometry, algebra and arithmetic and they are "either intuitively or demonstratively certain."³³ The second is open to our experience and includes contingent propositions. According to Hume

³¹ F. Heinemann, "The Analysis of Experience", p. 565.

³² David Hume, *An Inquiry of Human Reasoning*, § 20.

³³ *Ibid*, § 20.

“all reasoning concerning matters of fact seem to be founded on the relation of cause and effect.”³⁴ The validity of inferences from experiences captures Hume’s interest and this reasoning drives him to scrutinize the notions of cause and causality. This questioning gives birth to important conclusions in the development of empiricism. Experience, as the very source of our knowledge, is examined more deeply in Hume than Locke and Berkeley, since he also divides all the perceptions of human mind into two distinct kinds as impressions and ideas. Impressions are perceptions which enter with most force and violence, and ideas are “faint images of the impressions in thinking and reasoning.”³⁵ By doing this, he argues that he “restores the word, idea, to its original sense, from which Locke had perverted it, in making it stand for all our perceptions.”³⁶ Depending on these distinctions, he questions our way of establishing our knowledge on the basis of cause and effect. Such an inquiry forces him skeptical doubts concerning the operations of understanding, and his philosophy originates many important questions in modern epistemology. As a result, Hume’s philosophy is significant in forming the main principles of empiricism and the analysis of experience.

Therefore, it is obvious that the emphasis of Locke, Berkeley and Hume are different. Locke’s philosophy seems to be restricted in the realm of a methodic explanation, while Berkeley mainly considers the problem of existence. Hume on the other hand, deals with the establishment of our knowledge depending on his distinction between matters of facts and relations of ideas. Their differences will be much more clear when an analysis is made about these notions. These points play an important role in the development of classical empiricism and William James improves his philosophy over them. He made essential contributions to classical meaning of empiricism in order to accomplish his aim of making empiricism

³⁴ *Ibid*, § 22.

³⁵ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Part I, Section I.

³⁶ *Ibid*, Reference 1.

radical. Before clarifying these contributions, it is important to give an exposition of the basic problems of classical empiricism. I claim that these problems would be more intelligible when we first consider the historical background of classical empiricism. For this reason, in the following section, I shall briefly explore the historical background of empiricism by discussing the scientific outlook and the developments of the period.

2.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF EMPIRICISM

Copernican Revolution has been completed by the works of Galileo and Kepler in seventeenth century. For us, the process of shift from the center of the universe to a less important place has not become easily. This revolution causes several striking social and religious consequences. It has solved many complications of planetary motions, but it has also given rise to numerous important changes in our conception of the universe. Animistic formation of universe left its place to a mechanistic one via this revolution. The exact achievement of this process was provided by Newtonian mechanics. With him, the universe acquires a completely mechanistic explanation. As a result of these alterations, Aristotle's conception of motion that reigned in the background of all scientific and philosophic inquiries up to that time has turned upside down, and science and philosophy have been modified. To Aristotle, motion in the universe can be explained by the principle that everything in the universe has an original place and they move in order to reach their places. These places and the motion of the things are dependent on the substantial existence of them. Thus, Aristotle divides existences in accordance with their substantial qualities and he explains their motions with them. There is an Unmoved Mover in the background of the motion of universe; it is a pure substance and pure actuality.³⁷ It gives a circular direction to heavenly bodies. On the contrary, bodies on the Earth have a linear movement and this movement is originated from their beings. Hence, the laws of motion for terrestrial and heavenly bodies differ and this

³⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book XII.

variation is resulted from their substantial qualities in Aristotelian thinking. With the rise of observation techniques some comets were observed and they alter another Aristotelian principle that is the sublunary region is close to any change. Especially after Galileo's and Descartes's inquiries, motion in the universe has started to be explained by the interaction of bodies and spatial gravity instead of substantial differences. For that reason, the diverse laws of heavenly and terrestrial bodies are joined and entire universe becomes subject to the same rules of motion. These developments and modifications increased the importance of observation and experiments, and experimental sciences become to be appeared as an essential realm of inquisition. After Francis Bacon's and Thomas Hobbes's accent on experience, the method and experiments grow to be imperative in science. As Farhang Zabeeh states "the rise of experimental sciences went hand in hand with the empiricist's emphasis on experience."³⁸

However, to argue that the increase of experimental sciences has made progress in such a straight line remains insufficient. There are some exceptions in the rise of empiricism and experimental sciences also. We need some other details in order to explain them. Particularly, the influence of Platonism in the setting of scientific activities cannot be disregarded as well. The significance of observing particulars is in accordance with the empiricist argument that the chief source of knowledge is experience. The augment of experimental sciences is well-situated to this principle. On the other hand, "rationalists claim that there are significant ways in which our concepts and knowledge are gained independently of sense experience."³⁹ In addition, their central argument is that reason takes a noteworthy part in these significant ways. As for empiricists, while the chief source is sense experience, they accept the argument that in regulating and giving meanings to sense experience the role of reason cannot be ignored. This process of regulation and construing is linked

³⁸ Farhang, Zabeeh, *Hume: The Precursor of Modern Empiricism*, p. 8.

³⁹ Peter Markie, "Rationalism and Empiricism", p. 1.

with the conception of knowledge. Knowledge can reveal the unity in pluralities. From the time of Plato, we search for the identity in multiplicities. Socrates is always asking the same or common properties of different things, which is coalesced under the same name; as virtue, courageous etc. Furthermore, we can achieve the knowledge of these identities by recollection of the soul in the realm of beings. In other words, our soul has already the genuine knowledge of things as a part of its nature. The realities of things are found in our soul and it can remember this knowledge by recollection.⁴⁰ In this regard, *a priori* knowledge, that we can gain with reason alone has superior in the objects known according to Platonism. The things we know by reason alone have a higher degree of being, to what we know by sense experience.⁴¹ For this reason, theory is prior to our knowledge that is acquired by sense experience. We can find this Platonist claim in scientific investigations also. That is to say, universe has a perfect system in accordance with its perfect creator and we can reach the knowledge of this perfectness by our reason. This approach is raised by a new name, Neo-Platonism in Middle Ages, and it has directed all scientific inquiries of Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo and even Newton.⁴² Therefore, although Platonism did not give very importance to the observations of individualities, because of the superiority of what we know by reason alone, it provided some guidance to the scientific investigations of Middle Age and even to the modern science.

The other important consequence of these changes in seventeenth century is the separation of external world from our mind. In Descartes's *Meditations*, our mind and body appeared as two distinct substances.⁴³ Hence, the interaction between

⁴⁰ Plato, *Meno*, §§ 96-100.

⁴¹ Plato, *Republic*, 479e, 484c. This point is also explained in "Rationalism and Empiricism" by Peter Markie.

⁴² This Platonic influence in the background of scientific inquiries is clarified by Pierre Duhem in *To Save the Phenomena*, by William Cecile Dampier in *History of Science* and Thomas Kuhn in *Copernican Revolution*.

these two substances was presented to philosophers as a new and significant problem. Moreover, the problem concerning the correct method of getting knowledge about the external world came on light with this division. Thus, the definite and exact ways of knowledge came into view as an important dilemma of philosophy too. To construct a method in order to obtain knowledge was the main purpose of Cartesian thinking. To execute this method, both Descartes⁴⁴ and Bacon⁴⁵ try to find a new starting point for philosophy, but they emphasized very different sources of knowledge. While Descartes laid emphasis on the contribution of reason to knowledge, Bacon called attention to the importance of experience. In consequence, their works laid the foundation of continental rationalism and British empiricism. Moreover, the study of finding a correct way of making philosophy caused the separation of philosophy and science after Descartes. Until his time, the history of philosophy and history of science had been examined under the works of the same thinkers.⁴⁶ However, after Descartes, with the emphasis of the problem of method for science and philosophy, their realms are alienated. The search for a method for every discipline of knowledge is accepted as one of the indications of modernism. Hence, the question of method appears as an important problem of philosophy and science. This is one of the reasons for naming Descartes as “the father of modernism.”

Furthermore, the questions of “are there real things around us?” and “if there are how we can know about them?” are clarified by Descartes and these problems signify the important tasks of philosophy.⁴⁷ As a consequence of this process, our mind, as an active being that plays an important role in the construction of reality

⁴³ Rene, Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation II.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, Meditation 2, p. 3.

⁴⁵ See Francis Bacon’s *Novum Organum*.

⁴⁶ Thayer, *Meaning and Action*, p. 23.

⁴⁷ Thayer, *Meaning and Action*, p. 22.

and knowledge, is differentiated distinctly from its known object. Descartes separates the existence of our mind and the external objects. To achieve clear and distinct ideas, without any doubt, is the starting point of his philosophy. He begins questioning all knowledge up to that time under these criteria. The argument that we know the existence of our mind clearly and distinctly rather than the existence of external world is one of the consequences of his questioning.⁴⁸ We can know external objects by means of our mind; their knowledge is subjected to it and less clear than the knowledge of it. Accordingly, our mind and the external objects are different, since we know the existence of the former more precisely.⁴⁹ The substantial quality of our mind is thinking and the substantial quality of body is extension.⁵⁰ Because of these substantial differences, we know our mind more clearly and the nature of our mind and the nature of body are dissimilar, since the existence of mind is prior to the existence of body. This priority is related with Platonic conception of reality in the sense that reality can be acquired by means of reasoning and our mind has an active role in the formation of reality. This division of mind and body gives rise to other problems in philosophy and after this time all philosophical tasks are treated around the duality of mind and body.

Therefore, to reconcile the systems of our mind and the outer world is one of the main problems of epistemology, since their relation is called as knowledge. To provide a mathematical system to knowledge is the heritage of Plato in philosophy. In seventeenth century, there are some important developments that improve the confidence of scientists and philosophers in mathematics in terms of acquiring true knowledge of the universe by means of its principles. The solution of the planetary movements by the principles of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler and Newton plays an important role in the increasing of this confidence. For this reason, the thinkers of

⁴⁸ Rene, Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*.

⁴⁹ Descartes, *Rules for the Direction of our Native Intelligence*, Rule II and III.

⁵⁰ Descartes, *Meditations for the First Philosophy*, Mediation II and III.

this century believe that all the problems concerning universe can be solved by mathematical forms of knowledge. In this sense, to explain knowledge in terms of the encounter point of our mind and the outer world in a mathematical and certain way is an important problem of rationalists and classical empiricists in seventeenth century. However, both schools have different arguments concerning the source of this knowledge and I shall briefly explain the basic distinctions between them.

2.2 FRAMING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EMPIRICISM AND RATIONALISM

In order to clear out the difference between rationalism and empiricism, the determination of the source of knowledge is insufficient. Neither rationalists completely deny the data that is gained by sense experience, nor do empiricists refuse the role of reasoning in our knowledge entirely. In this sense, I want also to stress upon that the similar points between rationalism and empiricism are connected with their connection with the importance of the faculty of reasoning and indirectly Platonism. The resemblance between these two schools and their connection with Platonism is important in order to clear out the interpretation of James and to explain the basic features of his philosophy. For that reason, it is worthwhile to detail them here.

I have already mentioned that, whereas rationalists argue that there are important ways of in which our knowledge and concepts are acquired from the sources other than sense experience; empiricist stress upon that the ultimate source of our knowledge is sense experience. The disparity between them is an outcome of defining and explaining these significant ways that rationalist defend. Rationalists have five main theses about these ways; the intuition/deduction thesis, the innate knowledge and concepts thesis and the indispensability and superiority of reason

thesis.⁵¹ Now, I shall examine them by emphasizing the differences and similarities between these two schools.

The Intuition/Deduction thesis asserts that “some propositions in a particular subject area are knowable by reason alone; still others are knowable by being deduced from intuited propositions.”⁵² Intuition is a form of rational insight and by intellectually grasping a proposition we just see it to be true and a warranted belief.⁵³ This rational insight can explicitly be seen in Plato’s *Dialogues*, that Plato argues that knowledge is gained by recollection of our soul. In seventeenth century, Descartes is the main representative of this claim. “This evidence and certitude...which belongs to intuition is required not only in the enunciation of propositions, but also in discursive reasoning of whatever sort.”⁵⁴ Intuition and deduction are the main sources of certain knowledge, but rationalist have different arguments in particular subject areas that are known by intuition. Some of them “take mathematics to be knowable by intuition.”⁵⁵ Some of them take ethical propositions as intuitive and some of them take the knowledge of God. For instance Spinoza is another important rationalist of seventeenth century and he argues that the highest level of knowledge is intuition.⁵⁶ On the other hand, Locke is the first empiricist of this century and he also sees intuitive knowledge is “the clearest and most certain that human frailty is

⁵¹ In framing the difference between rationalism and empiricism I mainly used the definitions in “Rationalism and Empiricism” by Peter Markie. This article is included in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

⁵² Ibid, p. 2.

⁵³ This definition is herited from Plato that is “knowledge is justified or warranted belief”. In the dialogue of Meno, Socrates claims that true opinion or belief can direct us in a right way. However, this direction is some contingent, but the direction of genuine knowledge is certain. (Meno, 97c) Markie points out this fact by arguing that “knowing a particular proposition requires something from a lucky guess” and calls this additional element “warrant”.

⁵⁴ Descartes, *Rules for Direction of Mind*,

⁵⁵ “Rationalism and Empiricism”, p. 2-3.

⁵⁶ Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part V, Of the Power of the Intellect.

capable of.”⁵⁷ It is true that “classical empiricists displayed an undue hostility toward the demonstrative sciences,”⁵⁸ and they criticize the method of syllogism and the methods of logicians that are mostly dependent on reasoning. However, in their “admirable endeavor to establish an empirical basis for knowledge”⁵⁹ we can see a similar purpose in searching for unities and certain inferences from sense experiences. The role of intuition for certainty cannot be overlooked and therefore although their emphasis of experience cannot be ignored, empiricists have some similar points and aims to Platonic and classical rationalism in terms of their confidence to intuition. This similarity can be seen mostly in Locke’s epistemology, since like rationalists Locke finds intuitive knowledge as the highest knowledge. Peter Markie interprets this fact by arguing that “we can be rationalists in mathematics or a particular area of mathematics and empiricists in all or some of the physical sciences”. In this regard, “rationalism and empiricism only conflict when formulated to cover the same subject.”⁶⁰ Hence, if we divide the subject matters of philosophy, we can find similarities between rationalists and empiricists.

The second argument of rationalism is innate knowledge thesis; it claims that “we have knowledge of some truths in a particular subject area, as a part of our rational nature.”⁶¹ The third thesis can be examined with this thesis that; “we have some of the concepts we employ in a particular subject area, as part of our rational nature.”⁶² The first feature of these theses is the belief in the existence of some knowledge that is independent from experience, which empiricists are against it. The independence from experience means that some concepts or some principles and propositions are

⁵⁷ Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book IV, Chapter II.

⁵⁸ Farhang, Zabeeh, *Hume: The Precursor of Modern Empiricism*, p. 9.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 10.

⁶⁰ Markie, “Rationalism and Empiricism”, p. 5.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 5.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 5.

a part of our nature. Locke allocates the first and second books of his *Essay* for rejecting innate ideas and principles. Firstly, Locke considers that these innate idea and innate principle theses are interrelated, since “a particular instance of knowledge can only be innate if the concepts that are contained in the known propositions are also innate.”⁶³ This problem can be seen in the discussion between Leibniz and Locke. Leibniz mainly argues that Locke’s denial of innate ideas and his two sources of sensation and reflection are not compatible. This problem is chiefly connected with Locke’s procedure of reducing complex ideas to their sensational roots. His account of concept acquirement emerges circular. In order to achieve common properties of various things we must already have the concept of these properties. In other words, it does not seem that we can infer our concepts from sense experiences in Locke’s method. Peter Markie gives the example of causation at this point in Locke’s epistemology;

We get our concept of causation from our observation that some things receive their existences from the application and operation of some other things. Yet, we cannot make this observation unless we already have the concept of causation.⁶⁴

Leibniz argues that the fact that we must already have this concept means we have it innately, and for this reason he finds Locke’s refusal of innateness as insufficient. Locke explains the sensational sources of our complex ideas as if we have an innate capacity that we can articulate these concepts whatever sense data come to us. In this sense, he does not inquiry into the problem of getting these concepts from solely sense experience.⁶⁵ Actually, in order to reject innate knowledge, our way of inference from sense experiences must also be questioned as well as the source of knowledge. A more detailed questioning considering the validity of inferences from experience is made by David Hume as explained before. I shall elaborate their approaches to this problem in following sections. Thus, it can be said that the

⁶³ Ibid, p. 4.

⁶⁴ Markie, “Rationalism and Empiricism”, p. 15.

⁶⁵ This problem is explained by Bennett also.

problem of innate knowledge and concept thesis is problematical and open to other questions. In this sense, empiricist's rejection of innate concepts can be examined in terms of the meaning of innateness and the validity of inferences from sense experiences. Accordingly, the argument that while some rationalists accept the innate knowledge and concept thesis, empiricists are completely against it, which needs some other explanations.

The fourth and fifth theses are connected with each other; both of them emphasize the significant role of reason in gaining knowledge. The fourth thesis is the indispensability of reason thesis and states that "the knowledge we gain in a particular subject area could not have gained by us through sense experience." Moreover, the fifth thesis is the superiority of reason thesis and declares that "the knowledge we gain in a particular subject area is superior to any knowledge gained by sense experience."⁶⁶ The arguments that reason employs a noteworthy contribution in gaining knowledge and the empiricist argument that the only source of knowledge is sense experience seem contradicting, but we can approach to the problem from other perspectives. For instance, in Locke's empiricism experience, the ultimate source of our knowledge is divided into two kinds; as sensation and reflection. To explain the role of reflection in our experience results some problems in his system in accordance with Leibniz's critics. Locke presents reflection as a basis of knowledge, but he makes the distinction of sensation and reflection depending on experience. In other words, experience is divided into sensation and reflection, but Leibniz stresses upon that reflection is more fundamental than sensation. Merely sensation cannot be the basis of knowledge. Leibniz's emphasis of reflection is associated with the superiority of reason thesis. Without reasoning and contemplating or reflecting on sense experiences, the datum from senses cannot be meaningful and this fact makes human beings distinct from beasts and sheer empirics for Leibniz. In this regard, Leibniz interprets the superiority of reason as the distinction of human beings from beasts and sheer empirics as follows;

⁶⁶ Markie, "Rationalism and Empiricism", p. 4.

This is how man's knowledge differs from that of beasts (non-human animals): beasts are sheer empirics and are guided entirely by instances. An 'empiric' notices and relies on regularities in how things so, but is not curious about what explains them.⁶⁷

That is to say, to receive the datum from senses seems inadequate in constructing knowledge for rationalists. However, they share this point with empiricists also, since it cannot be said that empiricist denies the role of reflection and contemplating in knowledge entirely as we can see in Locke's position. This problem can be explained by a question; how is experience possible? In order for experience to be meaningful and expressed, reason becomes an indispensable part of this activity. How can we explain the part of this activity? The possible answers to these questions are significant in determining the difference between rationalism and empiricism. In explaining and regulating experiences reasoning is indispensable, but in what sense this fact is contrary to the main argument of empiricism is controversial. Before explaining other features of classical empiricists sequentially, I tried to explain the problematic and controversial points of the conflict between empiricism and rationalism, since they have significant roles in elaborating the radical empiricism of James. Now, I shall continue the inquiry of classical empiricism with John Locke. In this inquiry, the modes of existence of consciousness shall have an important role, but in this chapter I take their approaches briefly, since I shall give a more thorough clarification in the fourth chapter.

2.3 THE MODE OF EXISTENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN LOCKE

Locke is against the attempt of identifying the self or consciousness with a metaphysical soul-substance.⁶⁸ This is one of the characteristics of his empiricism,

⁶⁷ Leibniz, *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, preface, p. II.

⁶⁸ He is in the line of Kant at this point. Kant also states that "an elastic ball which strikes full upon a similar one imparts to it all its motion or all its state. Now let us assume substances after the analogy of bodies, where each imparts ideas to the next, along with a consciousness of them. We

since the superiority of this soul-substance can be connected with the theses of rationalist as I explained in above section. He does not use consciousness too much except in the discussion of the question whether the soul always thinks.⁶⁹ He is against this Cartesian argument that the substantial quality of soul is thinking and the soul always thinks. The proposition that the soul always think is not self-evident and it needs proofs according to Locke.⁷⁰ Furthermore, we cannot prove this argument, since “consciousness is the perception of what passes in a man’s own mind,”⁷¹ and we cannot perceive the continuity of our thinking by ourselves.⁷² Locke is against the argument that the soul always thinks depending on his rejection of a soul-substance and instead of it he particularly explains consciousness with the notion of continuous existences. This continued existence makes the identity of self or person.⁷³ He defines consciousness as the perception of our thinking and he defines perception as thinking also.⁷⁴ In this manner, consciousness means thinking of our thinking or awareness of our thinking. In explaining this function of thinking of thinking, he does not refer to any substance, but he refers to the continuity of different existences. Whether these continuous existences can make the identity of

must thus conceive a whole series, the first of which imparted its state and consciousness thereof to the second; this again its own state, along with that of the first, to the third; this again its own and states of all the previous ones, and so on. In such a case, the last substance will be conscious of all the states of the previously changed substances as its own, since those states were transferred to it along with the consciousness of them; nevertheless it would not have been the very same person in all these cases.” (*Critique of Pure Reason*, Transcendental Dialectic, Book II, Third Paralogism, in first edition) So, Kant is also against a metaphysical soul-substance, but James interprets him as an advocate of transcendental ego. I shall explain Kant’s position in the third chapter when analyzing James’s *Principles of Psychology*.

⁶⁹ Locke, *An Essay*, Book II, chapter I, §§ 10-19.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, Book II, chapter I, § 19.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, Book II, chapter I, § 18.

⁷² James argues that this argument is important.

⁷³ Locke, *An Essay*, Book II, chapter XXVII, prop 29. However, this point is criticized many thinkers in the sense that the continuity of something cannot make the identity of something. It also gives a direction to Hume’s argument.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, Book II, Chapter VI.

self or person is problematic, since it is difficult to explain an identity within continuous things. This point also inspires Hume in his “bundle of experiences”. The existence of consciousness, as thinking of our thinking, and the interpretation of James at this point will be clarified in the fourth chapter. On the other hand, here I shall go on to explain Locke’s empiricism and its relation with consciousness in terms of the function of thinking. The main activity of mind or consciousness is thinking and it will be worthwhile to examine this function in order to clarify Locke’s empiricism. So, I shall elucidate the epistemological standpoint of Locke in order to clear out the activity of mind in Locke’s empiricism.

There are competing arguments about the epistemological standpoint of John Locke. Some philosophers accept him as a rationalist, while others argue that he is the founder of empiricism in Britain. Given the classical distinction between empiricists and rationalists, it is difficult to determine his epistemology. He gives priority to experience, but he gives importance to our reasoning also. Moreover, he accepts mathematical knowledge as *a priori* and he believes in the certainty of it, while he maintains also that all our arguments can be reduced to empirical roots. Therefore, “Locke rejects rationalism in the form of any version of the Innate Knowledge or Innate Concepts theses, but he nonetheless adopts the Intuition/Deduction thesis with regard our knowledge of God’s existence.”⁷⁵ As for indispensability or superiority theses, Locke’s position is again critical, since we may infer controversial arguments concerning the function of mind on its activity, from his philosophy.

Therefore, the activity or passivity of mind is not a simple problem in Locke’s philosophy. As stated before, in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke determines sensation and reflection as the two sources of our knowledge.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Peter Markie, “Rationalism and Empiricism”, p. 5, Locke points out God’s existence in Book II, chapter IV, § 9.

⁷⁶ John, Locke, *An Essay*, Book II, Chapter I, § 1.

In the process of sensation, our mind is passive and is fitted to receive all sensations in a passive way. On the other hand, in reflection it is active.⁷⁷ Locke states this difference in order to explain the construction of our knowledge and the establishment of our complex ideas, since he argues that we have both simple and complex ideas in knowing. However, this determination can also be enlightened related to his conception of reality. We can claim that there are two systems of reality – the reality of mind and the reality of the external world- and we try to reconcile and unite them in order for knowledge to be possible. Locke assumes two systems of reality, too. He accepts that knowledge begins in experience, but in associating and uniting of our ideas reflection is important and active. In this sense, the capacity or structure of our mind or the system of our mind is important in producing knowledge in Locke. He does not want to talk about the structure of outer world, since he argues that we can infer the existence of outer world from our sensations, but he does not clear out this existence too much. That is, he avoids any explanation of the existence of outer reality, because he argues that we can know it only as far as experience allows us. On the other hand, the structure of our mind is the active part of our knowledge and in this sense reality can be known by means of reasoning mostly. Accordingly, because of the activity of mind, it is difficult to argue that Locke gives priority to the experience and is a strict empiricist. Moreover because of the passivity of mind in sensation and the activity of it in reflection, the ambiguity in the modes of existence of mind arises in his philosophy.⁷⁸ This problem is also connected with the general empiricist argument and can be seen in other empiricists.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, Book II, Chapter I, § 4.

⁷⁸ Michael, Losonsky, *Enlightenment and Action from Descartes to Kant*, Losonsky points out this fact by his phrase of “uneasy thinking” in his book, that is he argues that Locke’s way of thinking is uneasy, because mind is both passive and active.

All knowledge is founded on experience; and from that it ultimately derives itself.⁷⁹ This is the common principle of Locke, Berkeley and Hume. However, to put forward experience as the very source of knowledge is not a sufficient explanation for all the operation of knowing. To regulate the ideas originated from experience and to relate and connect them meaningfully are significant and necessary component of knowing process, which must be clarified also. The active role of reasoning becomes an important function in knowing and this function gives an organization which is not given by experience. As we shall see in James's radical empiricism, to explain all the functions of our thinking and knowing empirically, we should avoid assuming any order that is over and beyond experience. An empiricist epistemology aims at demonstrating all the ideas and activities of mind in the realm of experience. At this point, the way of inferences from our experiences becomes important for an empiricist epistemology, since it is difficult to explain this way without depending on the faculty of reasoning. Locke attempts such an explanation by rejecting all innate ideas, and by this way he wants to remove all the static and unexperiencable contribution of mind in knowledge. However, this attempt has some obscurities in terms of Locke's conception of idea.

2.3.1 The Conception of Idea in Locke

What is the source of our ideas in Locke's philosophy? Or where do our ideas come? The main difficulty of interpreting Locke's empiricism is originated from this question. He uses idea in two different senses. In Locke's thinking, idea sometimes becomes sense data, sometimes the response of sense-data in our mind. The point of contact between the outer world and our mind is the concept of idea. Following from this assumption, he wants to analyze our constructing knowledge in terms of simple and complex ideas in *An Essay*. In this sense, he is accepted as the founder of epistemology also. Before him, the main problem was about the

⁷⁹ John, Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, Chapter I, § 2.

possibility of knowledge, but by his philosophy the construction and limits of our knowledge become the more important focus of inquiry.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, his analysis about ideas is problematic. First of all he wants to avoid the argument that we can have some ideas without any activity of mind. His rejection of innate ideas is closely connected with this aim, since he wants to refuse the argument that ideas are the part of our nature, as Innate Knowledge and Concept Thesis asserts. However, he is also against the argument that ideas are the part of our passive reasoning. In order to have an idea, reason is indispensable, and the role of it is remarkable in his thinking. There must be an act of reasoning, otherwise when we begin to use of reason we would already have some ideas. However, this is not a passive act and this is not a natural part of our reasoning. We cannot have any idea depending on the fact that we have already the faculty of reasoning. For that reason, reasoning is indispensable, and Locke puts an emphasis on the activity of it. At this point, Locke argues as follows:

I allow therefore, a necessity that men should come to the use of reason before they get the knowledge of those general truths; but deny that men's coming to the use of reason is the time of their discovery.⁸¹

Locke's emphasis on the perception or thinking of the mind is noteworthy; for he is against the argument that mind can have some ideas without these activities. On the other hand, this activity cannot be accepted as an innate activity of mind that can produce new knowledge. He accepts that custom has an important role in knowing and reason can derive new knowledge from the old. In that sense, the activity of mind cannot be acknowledged as an origin of novelty and reason cannot produce knowledge by itself in Locke's epistemology. Nevertheless, his refusal of innate ideas is connected with generally assent principle rather than the activity of mind in his *Essay*. In this sense, this attitude seems not a reaction to the capacity and superiority of our reasoning. Questioning the capacity of reasoning is important for our concern about the mode of existence of consciousness and the Superiority of

⁸⁰ Nicholas, Jolley, *Locke, His Philosophical Thought*, p. 19, O'Connor D. *John Locke*, p. 27.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, Book I, Chapter I, § 12.

Reason thesis of rationalists. Moreover, it is that point makes Locke's position confused. Different from general empiricist argument, Locke's aim is to shake the passivity of mind in here, since he argues that our mind is active in acquiring ideas. However, senses are also ideas and he also claims that in the process of sensation our mind is completely passive. In order to clear out this problem, it will be convenient to clear out his conception of mind.

According to Locke's celebrated conception of *tabula rasa*, the mind is "a blank sheet of paper"⁸² without any innate idea or principle. If we follow a child from its birth,

...we may observe how the mind, by degrees, improves in these; and advances to the exercise of those other faculties of enlarging, compounding and abstracting its ideas, and of reasoning about them, and reflecting upon all these⁸³

In Locke's thinking, we have the capacities of abstraction of ideas and reflection upon them and the construction of our knowledge is largely dependent on these capacities. We begin to have any idea when we first have a sensation.⁸⁴ Our mind is fitted to receive impressions and this reception is not in its own power, it is completely passive in this operation. "The first capacity of human intellect is, - that the mind is fitted to receive the impressions made on it; either through the senses by outward objects, or by its own operations when it reflects on them."⁸⁵ "In this part the understanding is merely passive; and whether or not it will have these beginnings, and as it were materials of knowledge, is not in its own power."⁸⁶ According to these quotations, Locke accepts that the passive reception of

⁸² *Ibid*, Book I, Chapter I.

⁸³ *Ibid*, Book II, Chapter I, § 22.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, Book II, Chapter I, § 23.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, Book II, Chapter I, § 24.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, Book II, Chapter I, § 25.

sensations is the first determining property of our mind –or the structure of *tabula rasa*.

As it was said before, we have the capacities of abstraction of ideas and reflection upon them in Locke’s epistemology. In *Book II*, he gives explanations about our way of abstracting and relating our ideas. He defines abstraction as follows: “whereby ideas taken from particular beings become general names, applicable to whatever exists conformable to such abstract ideas.”⁸⁷ Therefore in the construction of general names and natures abstraction plays an important role. Thus, “general natures are nothing but abstract and partial ideas of more complex ones.”⁸⁸ Furthermore, these general names and abstract notions are indicating words in our language and they are also necessary for our knowledge.⁸⁹ By words we convey our ideas, which are the materials of knowledge. Moreover, our ideas should agree with reality in order for knowledge to be possible, Locke also states it as follows; “there is no knowledge of things conveyed by men’s words, when their ideas agree not to the reality of things.”⁹⁰ Our ideas and words, which are the signification of ideas, must agree with the reality of things; that is our ideas are the essence of things. Universal and necessary knowledge is possible for us on the condition that it is familiar about essences which are transparent to the intellect. Locke further argues that there is only one distantly reasonable explanation of how this condition might be satisfied: it is that the essences in question have been put up by the mind.⁹¹ Thus, our mind forms essences and ideas that are necessary for knowledge and the activity of our mind cannot be ignored in Locke’s understanding of knowledge at this point. According to Locke, our mind is passive only in the

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, Book II, Chapter XI, § 9.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, Book III, Chapter III, § 9.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, Book III, Chapter X, § 3.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, Book III, Chapter X, § 25.

⁹¹ Nicholas, Jolley, *Locke, His Philosophical Thought*, p. 92.

process of sensation, yet it is active in the further process of knowledge. Consequently, *tabula rasa* without any innate idea or principle has a certain structure of knowledge; and abstraction and relation of ideas are the important activities of this structure. As a result, his epistemology can be connected with the superiority of reason thesis. Furthermore, Locke's *tabula rasa* appears an important turning point in the history of philosophy, in the sense that he turns down the main problem of knowledge into a problem of method.

“Locke's real concern is to explain the basis for universal and necessary knowledge, and to chart its limits; he is not interested in demonstrating the possibility of knowledge in general.”⁹² To search for charting limits of knowledge sets forward the importance of Locke's method. He altered the point of discussion in the sense that up to his time the possibility of knowledge is the main problem for philosophy. Descartes proposed knowledge as the essential discussion of philosophy, but by Locke a theory of knowledge becomes the main debate.⁹³

While stressing on a theory of knowledge, Locke does not chiefly deal with a speculative metaphysics or the problem of existence. Descartes wants to find out the essences of mind and matter and the laws of the corporeal world. However, Locke finds these questions beyond our experience. Thus, his philosophy makes the possibility of metaphysics under suspicion. He particularly wants to demonstrate how our reason and experience operate in our knowledge. In this respect, his empiricism is doubtful in one sense that his philosophy does not clearly demonstrate that experience has a prior importance in our knowledge. This fact is criticized by Leibniz also as I stated before.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the emphasis on a

⁹² *Ibid*, p. 19.

⁹³ Nicholas, Jolley, p. 19, D. O'Connor *John Locke*, p. 27.

⁹⁴ Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, p. 15. Leibniz argues that Locke's theory is inconsistent in the sense that he should accept the faculties of reasoning and relating ideas as innate.

theory of knowledge gives a new direction to philosophy, and he changes the main problems of epistemology. I tried to give a framework of Locke's epistemology in terms of the conception of idea. In here, it will be worthwhile to talk about Locke's conception of the existence of our mind and the outer world in order to clarify the mode of existence of consciousness, which is the main focus of this thesis.

2.3.2 The Existence of Our Mind and the Outer World

In general, we think that before the ideas and knowledge there is a reality of outer world and our mind. Idea is commonly thought as a consequence of the relation between them and it is known as the operated response of sensations in our mind.⁹⁵ If we accept this general viewpoint, to explain the point of encounter between the outer and inner world would become difficult, since it is acknowledged that idea is only our inner response to the outer world. It is still in our mind, and it cannot reconcile the inner operation in mind and the outer world. Although Locke's usage of idea seems problematic for both Berkeley and Hume and modern thinkers,⁹⁶ the original part of his philosophy lies in his conception of idea. Before the existence of our mind, and the existence of outer world he considers the concept of idea and his philosophy is improved on this conception. This perspective gives a new way to empiricism in elaborating the activity of our mind and the existence of the outer world and our mind. Instead of explaining substance, Locke wants to explain the relation between mind and body by analyzing the constructing of ideas. In this sense, it can be said that his main interest is epistemology not metaphysics.⁹⁷ That

Though he assumes that we have not got any innate idea, he must accept that we have an innate capacity.

⁹⁵ Ibid, II, II, 7 Locke begins this chapter with the determination about sensation and reflection. He uses the conception of idea for both these sources of knowledge.

⁹⁶ Bennett, Jonathan, *Learning From Six Philosophers*, and *Locke, Berkeley and Hume, the Central Themes*, p. 25.

⁹⁷ In the footnote 80, I gave references from Nicholas Jolley and D. O'Connor. They argue that by Locke's epistemology the main focus of philosophy has been changed. Before Locke the main

is, as stated above he does not give so much explanation concerning the nature of things. As for the existence of the outer world, Locke would claim that we can infer the existence of outer world from our sensations. This is a reasonable inference, but Locke explains this fact only by arguing that we can talk about the existence of outer things as far as experience allows us. On the other hand, if we try to answer to the questions that how our mind exists or how our consciousness exists, we must find other explanations.

Locke defines consciousness as the continuity of experiences and a function that “unites existences and actions very remote in time into the same person.”⁹⁸ In this sense, the continuity of our sensations and experiences are the main indications of consciousness in his thinking. This way of explaining consciousness is compatible with an empirical definition, since an empirical conception of something must explain it with continual and non-substantial elements. Consequently, there is something that unites these existences and actions which provides the identity of them. For Locke, it is consciousness that provides this identity.⁹⁹ He explains the identity of a person by consciousness, but he does not give a complete explanation for the identity of an object. If we need a definite standpoint in knowledge, it can only be our mind or our consciousness in Locke. Our mind operates on the ideas from sensation and knowledge would become possible in this way. For one thing, a sense and its reaction in our reflection and our mind are passive in sensation and active in reflection. The problem of consciousness arises here in his thinking, since both the processes of sensation and reflection have simple and complex ideas. If we are passive in sensation, the complex ideas of sensation would become a problem. If we are active in reflection, the simple ideas of reflection cause a problem. In this manner, our mind is both active and passive at the same time and this conclusion

problem is the possibility of knowledge, but he turns the discussion to the construction of knowledge. Tillich in his *History of Philosophy* also considers Locke as the father of epistemology as well. These arguments may support my sentence. Moreover, I think that Locke’s change is connected with the fact that he develops his thinking over the analysis of ideas.

⁹⁸ Locke, *An Essay*, Book II, Chapter XXVII, § 23.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, Book II, Chapter XXVII, § 25.

brings forth an ambiguity concerning the making of consciousness or mind in Locke. Thus, this point is linked with his usage of idea.

As for Berkeley, abstract notions and the problem of existence that Locke does not give so much reference are the main sources of the difficulties of Locke's philosophy. While he criticizes Locke at this point, the main difficulty of his thinking arises from his dual conception of perception. I shall explain this difficulty in terms of its relation to general understanding of existence in his philosophy and its connection with the existence of consciousness or mind now.

2.4 THE PROBLEM OF EXISTENCE IN BERKELEY

Berkeley's empiricism is improved on an important problem that Locke does not touch upon too much; the problem of existence. Locke's philosophy inspires Berkeley in the sense that Locke keeps this problem beyond the issue of experience and avoids giving any explanations of it an indirect way. It can be inferred some presuppositions concerning Locke's conception of existence, but Locke does not ask this question explicitly. Berkeley, conversely, begins his philosophy with the question of "what is the meaning of existence?" He is essentially adjacent to the abstraction of existence from perception. His anti-abstractionism supports his immaterialism and idealism.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, it lays the foundation of his celebrated principle that "to be is to be perceived". This principle is also related to one of the general arguments of empiricism in Locke's philosophy. Having been the founder of empiricism, Locke argued that all knowledge come from experience. Yet, he does not mention the problem of how external things influence us and how they exist a lot.¹⁰¹ In order to be a complete empiricist Berkeley exhibits a different

¹⁰⁰ Margaret Atherton, "Berkeley's Anti-Abstractionism" in *Essays on the Philosophy of George Berkeley*, edited by Ernest Sosa, p. 47.

approach to this problem and he prefers to reject the notion of existence that is independent from our perception and argues that “the existence of an idea consists in being perceived.”¹⁰² Hence, it should not be forgotten that to make all knowledge empirical and to propose the existence of God as the main ground of all existence are two important intentions in the background of this principle. It is a strong and original enterprise into the realm of existence and empiricism, and it is the main characteristic and original part of Berkeley’s thinking.

What brings Berkeley’s philosophy a dynamic force is the thesis that “the existence of idea consists in being perceived.”¹⁰³ This thesis makes his philosophy remarkable and Hume interprets his significance like that “I look upon this to be one of the greatest and most valuable discoveries that has been made of late years in the republic of letters.”¹⁰⁴ The existence of ideas in our mind is the unique anchorage of existence in general and apart from ideas there exists “a perceiving and active being” called “mind, spirit, soul, or myself.”¹⁰⁵ In here, the main difference between the existence of ideas and existence of mind arises. In fact, whereas ideas have a passive existence in Berkeley’s philosophy, the mind has an active existence. Actually, the mind is the main cause of the existence of ideas, and that is why its existence is active and so different from the existence of ideas.

Therefore, ideas and mind definitely exist in Berkeley’s philosophy. In this way, he already mentions consciousness as an active being. The more Berkeley considered existence of ideas empirically, the more certain he was about the substantial

¹⁰¹ This problem is discussed indirectly under the notion of power in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. I will clear out Locke’s understanding of this problem in the fourth chapter of my thesis.

¹⁰² Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge*, § 2.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, § 2.

¹⁰⁴ Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 45.

¹⁰⁵ Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge*, § 2.

existence of consciousness. His main intention was to lean all knowledge on experience, but in implementing this, he conceives the ground of the existence and external objects first in the perception of mind, and then in God, which is the ultimate ground of the existence of external objects. In here, there arises a critical point about Berkeley's conception of perception.

2.4.1 Perception: God's or ours?

Berkeley's statement "to be is to be perceived" opens up the way in which he conceives the encounter point of outer world and our mind. He criticizes Locke in the sense that he does not give any explanation of existence and about the outer world.¹⁰⁶ In order to establish an empiricist epistemology, he argues that he does not want to accept any entity except our perceptions that come from experience. In this regard, he refuses the abstract notions of Locke and the conception of existence that is abstracted from our perceptions. Locke claims that all our knowledge is come from either sensation and reflection, however Berkeley emphasizes the immediacy of perceptions and this approach makes his empiricism more consistent than Locke, since the immediacy of perceptions and the conception of existence which is dependent our perceptions support the principle that "all knowledge come from experience", and can solve the contradiction that emerge from twofold sources of knowledge in Locke, that sensation and reflection. In addition, Locke's philosophy has some problems concerning the validity of general inferences from sense experiences. Yet, the identification of perceptions and existence seems a more comprehensive and complete empiricist strategy. Since we have perceptions from experiences, to regard any existence apart from them is made for empiricism.

However, this refutation does not mean that Berkeley denies the outer world completely. On the contrary, he wants to avoid skepticism about the external world, since he thinks that it would be an insult to the existence of God. Indeed, he

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, § 4.

criticizes other empiricists for their ignorance of God.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the outer world and even the whole universe is a consequence of the perceptions of God. The perception of God brings into existence of the whole universe. Even the existence of our mind is possible with the perception of God. In here, the active existence of our mind becomes passive. In the context of the existence of ideas and perceptions, our mind is active and is the cause of their existences. On the other hand, in the context of God's perceptions our mind is a passive being as a consequence of God's perceptions. This point is connected with the main focus of this inquiry that is the existence of consciousness. Hence there is a difficulty in understanding of Berkeley's conception of mind and this problem is taken up in different contexts by many thinkers.

There are different arguments about the conception of mind in Berkeley. Some thinkers argue that Berkeley considers mind as a substantive entity and some of them think that it is a system.¹⁰⁸ It seems a system in the context of the ideas, since the existence of ideas and the existence of mind are different in Berkeley. He argues that our mind exists differently from the ideas. The existence of ideas is passive, since their existence is dependent on the perception of them by our mind. In addition to this, the existence of our mind is active, because it brings about the existence of ideas by its faculty of perception. Furthermore, how it produces ideas is not a problem that Berkeley explains too much. Ideas are both a part of mind and produced by the perception of mind.¹⁰⁹ The two explanations of mind as a substantive entity and a system are originated from this fact. This problem is connected with two roles of mind in Berkeley. It is active in terms of ideas and it is

¹⁰⁷ Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge, and Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*.

¹⁰⁸ There are different arguments about this problem raised by S. A. Grave and C. M. Turbayne. In their discussions, they find some justifications about the Berkeley's conception of mind, both as an entity and as a system. Some of their articles are included in *Berkeley's Principles of Human Knowledge*, edited by Gale W. Engle and Gabriele Taylor.

¹⁰⁹ Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge*, § 2.

passive in terms of outer world or the perception of God. It is also related to the meaning of existence in Berkeley.

The meaning of existence is different for our mind and for outer world and for our ideas in Berkeley. The existence of ideas is dependent on the perception of our mind. In this sense, they have a passive existence. In contrast to the existence of our ideas, the existence of our mind is active, because it creates ideas by its perception. On the other hand, the existence of our mind is also passive, because at the same time its existence is dependent on the perception of God. In the final sense it exists, because God perceives mind. I want to summarize these different modes of existence around the problem of consciousness in Berkeley.

Consciousness or our mind is active for him, because the things in the external world are dependent on their perceptions by our mind. However, the main cause of the existence of external world is God's perception and since mind is also dependent on this perception it also passively exist. The existence of ideas is dependent on their perception by our mind. They are both a part of our mind and at the same time they are produced by our mind. In this way, our mind is a passive substantive entity, since it is made up of passive ideas. In addition to this, its existence is in need of God's perception. However, it is active and it is a system that produces ideas; since it perceives ideas and "to be is to be perceived". Thus, the problem of mind in terms of its passivity or activity can be summarized in this way.

To sum up, the existence of God and its perceptions constitute one of the main parts of Berkeley's thinking. After the principle of "to be is to be perceived", he argued that the things without our perception can still continue to exist since God perceives them. This argument is a stronger proof concerning the existence of God for Berkeley. He explains this fact as follows;

Men commonly believe that all things are known or perceived by God; whereas I, on the other side, immediately and necessarily conclude the being of a God, because all sensible things must be perceived by him.¹¹⁰

It is necessary to deny the existence of material substance for him; otherwise he cannot prove the existence of God. If he had not rejected the existence of material substance, the principle of “to be is to be perceived” and the empirical principle stated as “I only want to accept the existence of ideas that come from experience”, could not have been stand together in his philosophy. Besides, if he had not rejected the existence of material substance without our perception, he could not have proved the existence of God. That is to say, his refusal of material substance does not mean that external things do not exist, since they exist by the perceptions of God. In this sense, his second aim of proving God plays an important role. On the other hand, in order to complete this system he gives two meanings to the conception of existence. There is a real possibility of existence and it is applicable only for the existence of God.¹¹¹ From another point of view, the existence of our mind cannot pass beyond the real possibility of existence, since its existence only brings about the existence of the ideas that come from external world, but it does not bring about the external world itself. In here, Berkeley divides existence into two; he considers the real possibility of existence and another meaning of existence. The real possibility of existence is attributed to God, since it is God that is the cause of the external world in the long run. Even the existence of mind is dependent on it. Nevertheless, there is another conception of existence that belongs to mind.¹¹² The existence of ideas is the result of mind, but ideas cannot come into being the outer world. Although our mind is the cause of the existence of ideas, it cannot create anything in reality. Its activity is restricted into the realm of ideas only. Consequently, the two roles of mind can be seen in the empiricism of

¹¹⁰ Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonus*, from the second dialogue.

¹¹¹ Berkeley, *Principles*, § 5.

¹¹² In *Principles*, Berkeley clarifies that the existence of ideas is dependent on the perception of mind. In this sense, the mind is actively exist, but it needs the present of an omnipresent spiritual existence in order to exist, since we cannot prove the existence of it with our own perceptions.

Berkeley and I think that this problem is related to Berkeley's ambiguous conception of mind and existence. This problem also brings forth other difficulties concerning the nature of mind in his thinking. In order to conclude this part, I shall briefly summarize the Berkeley's viewpoint in terms of the mode of existence of consciousness.

2.4.2 Consciousness: Active or Passive?

It is difficult to explain the nature of mind in Berkeley. Although the mind has a central role in his philosophy, his explanation of mind is brief.¹¹³ Beyond the associations of our ideas and assembling knowledge, our mind is the single cause of all existence. Even he does not consider the association of ideas too much, he gives an essential role to our mind in terms of existence of ideas but he does not elaborate the activity of mind in knowledge in a comprehensive way. It would be good to sum up the main problems of his understanding of consciousness here.

As it was mentioned before "all knowledge is founded on experience" is the common principle of classical empiricists. Moreover, I tried to explain the difficulties of this principle. Experience is not a simple term, since it includes both knower and known and it is directly related with the interaction between them. Berkeley's analysis of existence has some difficulties about the existence of external objects and they are one of the main contributions of human experience. It

¹¹³ As I said above quotation, there are different arguments about Berkeley's conception of mind. According to Turbayne, Berkeley has two different conceptions of mind, one of them is substantive and the second is a system. In his article "Berkeley's Two Conception of Mind", he explains them. However S. A. Grave finds his explanations insufficient. In "The Minds and its Ideas: Some Problems in the interpretation of Berkeley" and "A Note on Berkeley's Conception of Mind", he claims that the difficulty of Berkeley's analysis of mind originates from his general principle that "to be is to be perceived". As said by Grave, "if an idea and the perception of an idea are identical, it is impossible for perception to be a modification of the mind". He maintains that if we take the mind as a system not as a substance in Berkeley "a place for perception can be found in this system"¹¹³, so we should take it as a system. In order to take it as a system, we should consider that the mind is entirely distinct from its ideas in Berkeley. At the same time, ideas also will have to become a part of the mind. The expression that 'part of the mind' can be explicable by the distinction of the mind and its ideas and their being heterogeneous.

is connected with Platonic realism, in the sense that all existence is dependent on reason alone. However, realism in modern sense is defined as the argument that “there is something existing whether someone perceives or not.”¹¹⁴ To identify all existence with the perception of our mind is incompatible with realism in that sense.¹¹⁵ There is another modern problem about Berkeley’s philosophy, i. e., solipsism. It is difficult to separate the existence of external world from our mind and it is difficult to explain that “how many minds can know one thing”¹¹⁶ in Berkeley’s philosophy.

Apart from these problems, the operations of our mind under the principle of “to be is to be perceived” are not made explicitly. According to this principle, our mind has an active existence, because ideas can exist by means of its perceptions. On the other hand, in Berkeley, ideas are also “parts of the mind” and constitute the existence of mind. In this sense, the activity of perception needs other explanations and this can be explained with two conception of perception as I said before. Association and regulation of ideas are important problems in the way of defining consciousness, in the sense that it is difficult to explain them empirically as mentioned before. Hence, how experience and our faculty of reasoning activate is not elaborated in Berkeley’s philosophy. Actually, to emphasize the faculty of reasoning can be seen as an indication of a rationalist philosophy. Moreover, to explain the role of experience is difficult, since the contribution of reasoning to experience must be explained also. Berkeley gives an innovative conception of existence; however he does not mention the operations of our mind too much. To explain the association of ideas is the main problem of David Hume.

¹¹⁴ This definition belongs to Montague in “May a Realist be a Pragmatist?”.

¹¹⁵ Bruce, Brotherston, “The Empirical Method in Philosophy”, p. 449.

¹¹⁶ This is one of the articles of William James. James tries to solve the problem of solipsism under the title of “How Two Minds Can Know One Thing”.

2.5 THE CHALLENGE OF HUME

David Hume takes the important aspects of Locke and Berkeley which are important for empiricism, and provides a clear and direct way to modern empiricism. Hume's main contribution to modern empiricism resides his views on the association of ideas. He takes the notion of causality from the position of *a priori* and reduces it into experiential roots.

The operations of consciousness are important for the aim of this research, because they are related with how we could give an account of the existence of consciousness or mind. In that sense, relations that regulate and give meaning to our experiences are quite significant. Experience is disclosed to us by means of causal relations¹¹⁷ and, the association of ideas is an important issue of Hume's philosophy;

Throughout this whole book, there are great pretensions to new discoveries in philosophy; but if anything can entitle to author so glorious a name as that of an inventor, it is the use he makes of the principle of the association of ideas, which enters into the most of his philosophy.¹¹⁸

The argument that all knowledge comes from experience may be proved by explaining the empirical roots of our ideas. However, the succession of an idea after another cannot be demonstrated easily. Our expectation of the succession of an idea after another is the main problem of Hume's thinking. This can also be called as the problem of induction. Before him, Locke, Berkeley and other empiricists claim that experience is the first source of our knowledge. The regulation and association of sense data and ideas was accepted as the main activity of our reasoning. Hume's main question is the source of this capacity of regulation. In order to clarify this fact, I will explicate his question concerning the association of ideas at first.

¹¹⁷ Wayne, Waxman, *Hume's Theory of Consciousness*, p. 2

¹¹⁸ David, Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, § 10.

2.5.1 Association of Ideas

In *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume states that matters of fact and relations of ideas are the two main objects of knowledge. Moreover, in the first part of the *Treatise* he makes a distinction between ideas and impressions. He defines ideas as the copies of impressions and he argues that they are less vivid than impressions. In order to be idea, an impression must come first and Hume is suspicious about the existence of ideas that we cannot demonstrate its impression. By doing this, Hume gives a more detailed explanation concerning the perceptions of our mind, since he does not call all our perceptions as ideas. He argues that;

..there is a considerable difference between the perceptions of mind, when a man feels the pain of excessive heat, or the pleasure of the moderate warmth and when he afterwards recalls to his memory his sensation, or anticipates it by imagination.¹¹⁹

Apart from the distinction between impressions and ideas, he also differentiates the objects of human reason as relations of ideas and matters of fact. The propositions we gain by the relations of ideas are demonstratively or intuitively true and do not say something about experience. Matters of facts are connected with experience and in the realm of experience he distinguishes impressions that directly come from experience and ideas that are the facsimiles of them. This distinction is similar to Locke's distinction between two sources of knowledge as sensation and reflection. Furthermore, there is a difference between them; Locke calls ideas both the products of sensation and reflection whereas Hume makes a difference between impressions and ideas. Hume's distinction is important for further empiricist arguments concerning directly experienced things and others.¹²⁰ On the other hand, the main interest of Hume is knowledge of matters of facts; in fact he wants to analyze the ways of association of ideas. In *Treatise* and *Inquiry*, searches for the

¹¹⁹ Hume, *Inquiry*, Section II, § 11.

¹²⁰ In his celebrated article "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", Quine considers the difference between as one of the dogmas of empiricism that is closely connected with the distinction between a priori and a posteriori knowledge.

source of our idea of causality and the foundation of our knowledge about matters of fact. At first, he looks for the source of association of ideas in our reasoning. He wants to find the origin of the idea of causality and says that “the knowledge of this relation is not by reasoning *a priori*; but arises entirely from experience.”¹²¹ The source of every idea is an impression. Impressions come from experience and without impressions we cannot have any idea. Since every idea come from experience, Hume argues that the relations between ideas also can come from only experience. Without impressions, we cannot have anything new and the condition of associations of ideas can only be dependent on experience. Impressions are the unique ground of our knowledge and the regulation between ideas are connected with impressions that come from experience. As a consequence of these arguments, in *Treatise*, he turns down the argument that causal relations are *a priori*. He argues that we have the idea of causal relations as a result of our habits. The inquiry for the idea of causality constitutes an important part of Hume’s empiricism. He differentiates the impressions of sensation and reflection and argues that the source of our idea of a cause is a derived impression or an impression of reflection not sensation. In this sense, his questioning of causality leads him to argue that all the unions of ideas and all the inferences of causes to effects are founded on custom. “Had ideas no more union in the fancy than objects seem to have to the understanding, we could never draw any inference from causes to effects, or repose belief in any matter of fact. The inference, therefore, depend solely on the union of ideas.”¹²² “We are determined by CUSTOM alone to suppose the future conformable to the past.”¹²³ To sum up, the main relation that unites our ideas is causality, which is not *a priori* but arises as a result of custom and habit in Hume’s epistemology. On the other hand, this questioning into the main ground of our knowledge brings forth skepticism about all our knowledge in Hume’s thinking.

¹²¹ Hume, *Inquiry*, § 25.

¹²² Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, § 92.

¹²³ *Ibid*, § 652.

2.5.2 Hume's Skepticism

The argument that causality is not known *a priori* is related to the conception of reality also. Hume's analysis of causation shakes the reality of the existence of our perceptions, and our mind and causal relations. As he argues that in *Treatise*, "all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences, and ...the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences."¹²⁴ The rejection of real connections brings forth skepticism concerning our knowledge about our mind and the outer world. Moreover, in *Inquiry*, he argues that in order something to be real it must have an impression. We cannot demonstrate the sense impression of causal relations and we cannot tie our idea of cause to anything external, for this reason the main ground of our knowledge has skeptical doubts in Hume. This attitude is the main cause of his skepticism. It is connected with both the existence of external things and the existence of mind. Consequently, to question the relations of cause and effect also drives him into a deep skepticism in general. Although he makes the existence of our mind susceptible, his theory of consciousness is connected with the continuity of different existences. He gives a definition of consciousness or mind in *Treatise*.

2.5.3 The Conception of Consciousness in Hume

As a result of his questioning on association of ideas, Hume develops a theory of consciousness dependent on the continuity of different existents, similar to Locke's account of consciousness, which is dependent on the continuity of experiences. However, Hume does not define it a conception that unites our experiences and has an understanding similar to atomism. He argues that we cannot find an impression of our consciousness and this argument directs him to a skeptical point in this manner. While Locke attributes a function of unification to our consciousness he goes farther than Locke and stresses upon the bundle of experiences rather than

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, § 636.

Locke's emphasis on the argument that consciousness makes the personal identity. Hume explains this fact in *Treatise* as follows; "it is the opinion of a continued existence, which first take place, and without much study or reflection draws the other along with it, wherever the mind follows its first and most natural tendency."¹²⁵ For him, consciousness is the collection and the continuity of existences and it cannot be said that it is a self-subsistent entity.

Accordingly, the importance of Hume's empiricism especially lies in his questioning about the nature of relations. Although, this questioning ends up with skepticism, it opens many new questions in modern epistemology.

To sum up, Locke's philosophy opens the way to an empirical theory of knowledge. Berkeley meets the deficit of his philosophy in terms of existence. Hume, on the other hand, analyzes the relations of our ideas that are the important part of our reasoning and knowledge. The philosophies of them have given directions to modern empiricism and especially to the radical empiricism of William James.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, § 210.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN WILLIAM JAMES

William James alters the meaning of philosophy in general. He thinks that philosophy cannot be a distinct discipline from our life and it is actually a matter of temperament. Philosophy is not only a study of knowledge and wisdom, but it must also give answers to the problems of our life. It must reflect the varieties of experiences, since its realm is not restricted with knowledge and wisdom in this sense. This approach of him is important in the development of his radical empiricism.

William James considers philosophy as a worldview, a *Weltanschauung*. Furthermore, he calls his worldview as “radical empiricism”.¹²⁶ His world is pluralistic that points out the importance of parts and in this sense he finds his philosophy close to empiricism. He claims that empiricism must become radical and in order to make it radical he emphasizes the experience of relations. In order to make empiricism radical, he argues that relations must be accepted as real as things and facts. We experience relations like other things and the experienced relations are the main ground of his radical empiricism. In addition to this, he takes pragmatism as the unique and advantageous method of philosophy. He argues that via the pragmatic method, the verbal and unnecessary problems of philosophy can be dissolved. Though these two attitudes of philosophy promote each other in his thinking at some points, they at the same time contradict each other. The realm of consciousness has essential importance in James, since it has significant implications both for radical empiricism and pragmatism. It reflects the main ambiguities of James’s thinking. In this chapter, I shall elaborate the way in

¹²⁶ James, *Essays*, p. 41.

which James's account of consciousness has developed and transformed throughout his career. In this analysis, I shall also refer to his radical empiricism and pragmatism as providing the framework through which one can analyze his account of consciousness.

Experience is a vague term and its vagueness becomes problematic in the face of the efforts to conceive all existence and knowledge as dependent on experience. The emphasis of experience in James's thinking is closely connected with his reaction to the distinction between subject and object. He is against the main ground of subjectivity as consciousness and he argues that consciousness does not exist in his article "Does Consciousness Exist?" in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. At the beginning of his thinking, he wants to remove the duality of mind or consciousness and its object. He initiates his philosophy by arguing that if we want a primary stuff in philosophy, then it must be neither consciousness nor its object but rather experience. James conceives philosophy by giving strong emphasis on experience. This is the way he thinks he could avoid Cartesian dualism. Relations are the most important elements of his philosophy and he modifies Cartesian dualism by defining thought and things as subjective and objective parts of the relations of experience.¹²⁷ Accordingly, establishing a philosophy without a dualism makes his attempt of rejecting consciousness completely meaningful. However, in *Principles of Psychology* he has also a detailed explanation of consciousness as "stream of thought". He details the concept of consciousness in this major book, and the main argument of him is that consciousness a stream of thought. James's explanation of the flow of thought is important, since it provides a different account with regards to the problems of thinking and the distinction between mind and body. However, in *Principles* while he qualifies the mode of the existence of consciousness by using the metaphor of a stream, in *Essays* he claims that it is time for refusing the concept of consciousness completely in philosophy. The relation between the stream of thought in *Principles* and the pure experience

¹²⁷ James, *Essays*, p. 5.

in *Essays* is important within his development of thinking. He provides new philosophic elements from different points of views, and the perspectives of *Essays* and *Principles* are important in his conception of consciousness. In order to clarify and evaluate these two modes of consciousness and the two aspects of his philosophy, I shall first explain the stream of thought in the following section.

3.1 STREAM OF THOUGHT

William James developed his celebrated conception of “the stream of thought” in *Principles of Psychology*. This new understanding of thought influences many different realms, as philosophy, psychology and literature. In this sense, it can be accepted as an important turning point in the history of thought. The difference of this conception from older theories will be elaborated in this section. James mainly uses this conception in defining consciousness and our way of thinking. Different from other formations of consciousness, he gives preference to the flow of thinking instead of considering consciousness as a distinct entity that controls this flow. This is the main originality of his thinking, since he wants to attribute a different nature to the concept of consciousness by explaining it as a “stream of thought”. To refuse a definite existence of consciousness and explore it with the function of thinking are also related to James’s different account of existence and reality. How can consciousness be defined as a flow of thought? Or how does thought flow? How does James’s concept of “stream of thought” transform the conception of reality, knowledge and existence? These are the main questions of this section. I will explain the formation of consciousness that we find in *Principles* first. However, before this major work, there are some articles that give us hints about the development of James’s thought. I want to focus on the article of “What is an Emotion?” since I find it important in the development of James’s notion of consciousness. In the beginning of it, James talks about our general understanding of emotions. He is mainly interested in the belief that bodily disturbances are the manifestations of emotions and he tackles the argument that emotions are the cause

of these bodily disturbances. Before his reaction to this argument, he explains the general understanding of emotions as follows;

Surprise, curiosity, rapture, fear, anger, lust, greed, and the like, become then the names of the mental states with which the person is possessed. The bodily disturbances are said to be the "manifestation" of these several emotions, their "expression" or "natural language"; and these emotions themselves, being so strongly characterized both from within and without, may be called the *standard* emotions.

Our natural way of thinking about these standard emotions is that the mental perception of some fact excites the mental affection called the emotion, and that this latter state of mind gives rise to the bodily expression.¹²⁸

After these statements, he explores his understanding,

My thesis on the contrary is that *the bodily* changes follow directly the PERCEPTION of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the [p.190] same changes as they occur IS the emotion.¹²⁹

He also details of this argument by giving examples from ordinary life;

[W]e 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 could not actually *feel* afraid or angry.¹³⁰

The main argument of this quotation is that James is in opposition to the priority of mental states over the bodily states of us. In general, cognition is thought to be a cause of our behaviors, emotions and desires. We believe that we think and behave according to our decisions or the products of our reasoning. James is mainly against

¹²⁸ William James, "What is an Emotion?", pp. 189, 190.

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 190.

¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 190.

this causal relation and the priority of our reasoning to our behaviors and physical states. The relation between our reasoning and our behavior and emotions is important in the sense that it is connected with the classical dualism of mind and body. From the time of Descartes, we think that our mind comes prior to our body, since for Descartes thinking is the main activity of our being. We know everything with this activity, and for this reason, the existence of our mind comes first in the comprehension of our body and external world. These are the main thesis that James wants to remove from philosophy and psychology. Hence in “What is an Emotion?” he refuses the priority of mentality concerning emotions. He wants to construct a synchrony between bodily states and mental states and claims that emotions are the responses of external changes and argues that “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.”¹³¹ This intellectual perception flows in our thought and this flow is the main part of the explanation of consciousness in James’s thinking. To be precise, this flow is the thought itself. This stream of thought turns into the flow of pure experience in radical empiricism, but before this other aspect of James’s thinking it will be convenient to explain the stream of thought in *Principles* first.

The rejection of causality between mind and body is important for James’s conception of consciousness in the sense that when he talks about the stream of thought he also considers the comprehension of external reality. In other words, the stream of thought is at the same time the stream of external world. The external world and our thinking are fused into this stream. This understanding is related to his conception of reality. That is to say, he does not want to assume two distinct realities. He claims that “it is difficult for me to detect in the activity any purely spiritual element at all.”¹³² The activity is the flow of thinking, and this flow

¹³¹ Ibid, p. 193.

includes neither purely spiritual element nor purely material element. Accordingly, there is no duality in James's conception of reality, for stream of thought reveals both material and spiritual realities. In this sense, James is against Platonic conception of reality and Cartesian duality. Moreover, the external reality in this activity cannot be differentiated from the stream of thought, since all reality "means simply relation to our emotional and active life...whatever excites and stimulates our interest is real."¹³³ Hence, the flow of thought is connected with our interests and stimulations, since they give directions to it. On the other hand, James asks the question of whether we can find a stable control center in this stream. He answers that we cannot find any static spirituality, since the welcomings or rejections are determined by the stream itself. In this manner, he refuses the view that there is a home of interest that accepts and refuses the incomings in this flow of thought.¹³⁴ On the other hand, consciousness is itself selective; but there is nothing as an active part of consciousness in the stream of thought. This selectiveness of the stream is explained as the term of "appropriation" in *Principles*, but before explaining this term I want to elaborate the problem within his conception of stream of thought and the existence of consciousness.

How can consciousness be defined as a stream of thought? For James, the first fact that the psychologists must accept is "thought goes on". Instead of "something thinks", he prefers to say that "thought goes on". By doing this, he refuses to accept any static entity that can think beyond the stream of our thought. In other words, the stream can be identified with consciousness, but consciousness cannot be a stable entity that guides this stream. The activity of thinking and the existence of consciousness cannot be differentiated. Consciousness cannot be out of thinking and thinking can only be thought as a flow, not as a stable entity that selects

¹³² James, *Principles*, vol. I, p. 300.

¹³³ *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 295.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 297.

something. James explains the suitability of the term of stream or a river rather than chain or train for consciousness as follows:

Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as 'chain' or 'train' do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' is the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life.¹³⁵

He does not want to prefer the words of chain or train, since if we define consciousness as a chain; we have to assume a jointer of this chain. In this sense, we call this jointer as consciousness and we must have to accept it as a regulative function in this stream. However, James does not yearn to differentiate the existence of consciousness by defining it as a regulator in this stream. He wishes to think consciousness as the stream itself. On the other hand, there is another question arising here; how does thought flow without any controller or without any reference point that gives a direction to it? He answers this question by explaining some resting places and the places of flight in this stream:

As we take, in fact, a general view of the wonderful stream of our consciousness, what strikes us first is this different pace of its parts. Like a bird's life, it seems to me made of an alternation of flights and perchings...The resting-places are usually occupied by sensorial imagination of some sort, whose peculiarity is that they can be held before the mind for an indefinite time, and contemplated without changing; the places of flight are filled with thoughts of relations, static or dynamic, that for the most part obtain between the matters contemplated in the period of comparative rest.¹³⁶

The flights of place and substantive conclusions are the main parts of this stream. There is no definite direction of this stream. These flights make it an open-ended stream. Furthermore, they have some aims and they want to acquire resting-places

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 239.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 243.

in their motion. For this reason, he uses the resting places and flights of place in order to explain the purposeful¹³⁷ character of thought also;

Let us call the resting-places the 'substantive parts', and the places of flight the 'transitive parts', of the stream of thought. It then appears 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 we may say that the main use of the transitive parts is to lead us from one substantive conclusion to another.¹³⁸

James argues that transitive parts of the flow lead to substantive conclusions. It means that there is a purpose of these parts in the stream. Accordingly, the stream is purposeful and leads to substantive parts. He emphasizes that we cannot determine definite elements of this stream. However, we must assume some transitive parts that have distinct aims. In addition to this, we must accept that there can be some substantive conclusions in it. There is a problem brought forth here; in a stream without any ending or beginning and without any jointer or regulator who is the owner of these purposes? Or who gives a direction to these transitive parts? If this flow needs resting and substantive places, there must be something that determines its will or its aims or purposes. In order to clear out these problems, James makes some explanations concerning the nature of the stream of thought;

Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. With it goes to sense of its relations, near and remote, the dying echo of whence it acme to us, the dawning sense of whither it is to lead. The significance, the value of the image is all in this halo or penumbra that surrounds and escorts it, -or rather that is fused into one with it and has become bone of a its bone and flesh of its flesh; leaving it is true, an image of the same thing it was before, but making it an image of that thing newly taken and freshly understood.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Ellen Kappy Suckiel argues that James's conception of consciousness is teleological, since James perceives human being having some interests and demands and they are the main part of operations of consciousness. Hence consciousness has a teleological character for Suckiel, *The Pragmatic Philosophy of William James*. Her interpretation is mainly dependent on the references from James's article "Remarks on Spencer's Definition of Mind as Correspondence" and *Principles of Psychology*.

¹³⁸ James, *Principles*, vol. I, p. 243.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, vol., I, p. 255.

From this quotation, it is clear that the flow of consciousness is completely free and every new thing in this flow becomes meaningful within its surrounding and the flows around it. In other words, everything in this stream can be settled by means of its context and relations. However, James's argument does not harbor an atomic conception of thought; since there cannot be definite aims of every new thing. The aim is determined by the stream itself. Accordingly, neither the aims nor the contexts or the surrounding of new things are stable. All of them are subject to change. On the other hand, if everything is in a state of change, again the problem of selectivity arises. Who does select the data? James wants to keep the selectivity of mind, since if there were not selectivity; the conclusion would be condemned to affirm a chaotic flow;

The mind, in short, works on the data it receives very much a sculptor works on his block of a stone. In a sense the statue stood there from eternity. But there were a thousand different ones beside it, and the sculptor alone is to thank for having extricated this one from the rest. Just so the world of each of us, howsoever different our several views of it may be, all lay embedded in the primordial chaos of sensation, which gave the mere matter to the thought of all of us indifferently. We may, if we like, by our reasonings unwind things back to that black and jointless continuity of space and moving clouds of swarming atoms which science calls the only real world. But all the while the world we live in will be that which our ancestors and we, by slowly cumulative strokes of choice, have extricated out of this, like sculptors, by simple rejecting certain portions of the given stuff.¹⁴⁰

The mind is selective and the stream of thought is closely connected with this selectivity. In fact, the selectivity of the mind cannot be a distinct part of this flow. However, James emphasizes the fact that there cannot be any superior active element in consciousness that selects something. However, I claim that the entity that selects and works on the data seems to be a superior element and the problem that I want to exhibit is connected with this point. He details this problem by explaining the conception of self. Self is another important concept in defining consciousness, since in general consciousness is defined as the faculty that enables us being aware of our self. According to James's definition, self is a property "we

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, vol. I, pp. 288-289.

tempted to call by the name of me.”¹⁴¹ In this sense, we can have very different selves, as social, spiritual etc. Here, James formulates an important question; “what is this self of all the other selves?” In order to give an answer to this question first he states the counter argument;

They would call it the active element in all consciousness; saying that whatever qualities a man’s feelings may possess, or whatever content his thought may include, there is a spiritual something in him which seems to go out to meet these qualities and contents, whilst they seem to come in to be received by it. It is what welcomes or rejects.¹⁴²

However, James’s main intention is to demonstrate that there cannot be any permanent active element to give us the feeling of this process or stream.

Not necessarily that it should be this process or the mere feeling of this process, but that it should be in some close way related to this process; for it plays a part analogous to it in the psychic life, being a sort of junction at which sensory ideas terminate and from which motor ideas proceed, and forming a kind of link between the two. Being more incessantly there than any other single element of the mental life, the other elements end by seeming to accrete round it and belong to it. It becomes opposed to them as the permanent is opposed to the changing and the inconstant.¹⁴³

Accordingly, to James a stable and ceaseless controller or active regulator is against the nature of this flow. It is a self-evident flow and it refers nothing other than itself, since it flows freely.

To sum up, before the relation between mind and body, James wants to recognize that there is a stream of thought. There is no owner or controller of this flow. It flows freely, and every new thing becomes a part of this flow by its surroundings and in different contexts. In addition to this, in this becoming, the selectivity of our mind plays an important role. The mind carves its receptions like a sculptor, and this selectivity is an indispensable part of this flow. My question is that how

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 291.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 297.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, vol. I., p. 298.

selectivity or an active element can be in this flow of thought, since it is contrary to its nature.¹⁴⁴ According to James's explanations, this selective function cannot be out of this flow. However, he defines this element both as a part of this flow and as a director of this flow. It seems that James wants to fulfill two aims that contradict with each other. One of them is to explain our way of thinking without any active element. He thinks that our thought is in a free order without any end or start. There is no definite direction of our reasoning; and it is subject to change in terms of different contexts and different data. Hence it has no aims also; since there must be something active for a purpose or a *telos*. In this sense, we can explain each thought related to each other in a flow. However, he also depicts that our mind is selective and the reality means our stimulations and excitements. The suitability of this activity with this free flow seems to be a problem. How can these two standpoints stand together in a completely free stream? James proposes another concept in order to solve this problem; that is, appropriation.

3.1.1 Appropriation

In the flow of different selves there must be something that we know ourselves by means of it. James explains the problem in one sentence "who owns the last self owns the self before the last, for what possesses the possessor possesses the possessed."¹⁴⁵ In other words, the flow and the possessor of the flow cannot be differentiated. James does not want to recognize a stable possessor, since he claims that the settlement of a thought in this stream must not be determined by a

¹⁴⁴ A similar problem is questioned in "The Stream of Consciousness" by Evander Bradley McGilvary. In his article, Bradley questions the flow of thought in terms of its pure empirical flowing. James claims that there are time-gaps and breaches in this stream. Bradley argues that "the doctrine of perishing pulses of thought within the empirically continuous stream of thought is a result of confusions". The main problem that Bradley points out is that the existence of these pulses and gaps in the stream are against to an empirical and pure stream. In addition, while Bradley criticizes the confusions in the understanding of the stream of consciousness, Wendel Bush also argues that the notion of flux is not appropriate to construct an empiricist philosophy in "The Empiricism of James".

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 340.

static entity or by a different entity other than itself. If we consider something definite and determinate in this stream, it cannot flow as in the way James argues. It must flow freely, since it is not a chain, and the owner of the flow is the flow itself. In this sense, the appropriation of a thought in this stream cannot be predictable:

The only point that is obscure is the act of appropriation itself...A thing cannot appropriate itself; it is itself; and still less can it disown itself. There must be an agent of the appropriating and disowning; but that agent we have already named. It is the Thought to whom the various 'constituents' are known.¹⁴⁶

James also clears out my above question in this quotation: If the actor of this appropriation is the thought itself, then how can the stream of thought flow freely? He also gives an answer to this question in the quotation; there is nothing who knows the thought. It is the thought to whom the various constituents are known. "It is a thought, at each moment different from that of the last moment, but appropriate of the latter, together with all that the later called its own."¹⁴⁷ Consequently, a thought is appropriated in the stream by another thought, but this appropriation cannot be a product of casual relation or a stable reference. This appropriation belongs to the stream and it cannot be differentiated from it. If we consider any gaps between these appropriations, we must have to accept that our thought is in a chain and consciousness must associate and joint the different parts of this chain. However, the main purpose of James is to prove that it is unnecessary and baseless to assume such a concept of consciousness.¹⁴⁸ By doing this, he wants to turn upside down the superiority of mind and reasoning that is a heritage of Cartesian dualism. In another quotation, he argues that although the objects of thought are various and composed, the thought itself cannot have parts. In this unique and whole stream, we cannot reduce the properties of objects known

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 340.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 401.

¹⁴⁸ He elaborates and proves this intention in "Does Consciousness Exist" in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*.

to knower. In other words, again he is rejecting the conception of duality of knower and known in this stream;

Our thought is not composed of parts, however, so composed of its objects may be. There is no originally chaotic manifold in it to be reduced to order. There is something almost shocking in the notion of so chaste a function carrying this Kantian hurly-burly in her womb. If we are to have a dualism of Thought and Reality at all, the multiplicity should be lodged in the latter and not in the former member of the couple of related terms. The parts and their relations surely belong less to the knower to what is known.¹⁴⁹

James criticizes the other theories of soul searching beyond this everlasting stream of thought. All the theories that look for the soul beyond this flow would fall into the fallacy of a superior and non-existent being. He divides these theories into three categories: spiritualism, associationism and transcendentalism.¹⁵⁰ They all make the same mistake because of assuming a stable conception of consciousness that can control the stream of thought. Nevertheless, the assumption that there is a consciousness that associates our ideas or that unites the multiplicity and continuity of experiences and thoughts are the argument James wants to remove.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 363.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 342-373. The spiritualist view is mainly raised by Plato and Aristotle. According to them, substance is a self-existent term and the activity of thinking can be explained only by means of an active substance; that is, soul. This view is also believed in by Hobbes, Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, Wolf and Berkeley. However, James claims that “the substance must give rise to a stream of consciousness continuous with the present stream, in order to arouse or hope, but of this mere persistence of the substance per se offers no guarantee” (p. 348). Consequently, to James “soul explains nothing and guarantees nothing” (p. 350), so we cannot find any ground of being such a conception of soul. As for associationism, Locke paves the way of it, and Hume developed in *Treatise*. This theory emphasizes the continuity of thought and experiences and defines consciousness as “bundle of experiences”. However, the associationists “demand a more real connection than this obvious and verifiable likeness and continuity” (p. 353). In this sense, they also assume a substantive consciousness beyond this continuity of thought and experience and this is a baseless assumption for James. The most important pioneer of transcendentalist view is Kant. Kant assumes a transcendental ego that can “bring the multiplicity in thought inside the mind” (p. 363). There is multiplicity in thought and transcendental ego regulates and knows it. For James, it is related with the same difficulty that “the many is known by the one”. However, James argues that we cannot find any ground for such an ego, and “by Kant’s confession, the transcendental Ego has no properties, and from it nothing can be deduced” (p. 364). Accordingly, since all these theories assume a consciousness beyond the stream of thought, their conception of it is baseless and has no real ground.

According to his conception, the stream can control itself and every new thought is appropriated in this stream by means of thought alone.

Consequently, the stream of thought reflects both consciousness and the relation between consciousness or mind and the external reality in James's thinking. I claim that James has a twofold explanation of consciousness. One of them is the passive mode of consciousness, since there can be no active contribution to a completely free stream of consciousness. At the same time, he also considers an active mode of consciousness, since he argues that the selective activity of our mind or consciousness carves the world we live in. Given this active mode of consciousness, the reality is not completely independent from us, since we actively contribute in the construction of it by our selective attending, interests and demands. James later calls this human contribution under the label of humanism. Here, it reflects the active role of consciousness. The activity and the passivity of consciousness open up the ambiguous core of James's philosophy. This ambiguity can be expressed as the fact that a thing cannot appropriate itself as James stated in the above quotation. Thought is active, since it creates its own flow. In addition to this, it freely flows and nothing can be definite in its appropriation. Nevertheless, its activity brings about some definite elements in it and these elements are not compatible with its independent nature. I tried to summarize how James conceives active and passive modes of consciousness in *Principles*. Now I shall present and evaluate this problem from the perspective of radical empiricism.

3.2 CONSCIOUSNESS DOES NOT EXIST!

In the following section, we will see how James's main intention of refusing the gap between mind and body, or subject and object, is articulated under the label of radical empiricism. This intention that we see in *Principles* by the phrase of "the stream of thought" is also transformed into another context in *Essays* by his conception of pure experience. It can be said that he considers mind-body

distinction from two different perspectives; the first perspective reflects the realm of consciousness or mind in *Principles*, where the second perspective mirrors the realm of experience and external objects in *Essays*. Both perspectives are connected with his main target. In order to remove the Cartesian distinction he introduces new grounds for philosophy. This ground is the stream of thought in *Principles*, but it becomes pure experience in *Essays*. In order to elaborate the second perspective it will be good to analyze his well-known article “Does Consciousness Exist?”, since this article reveals the main characteristics of radical empiricism and it explores the conception of pure experience. James exhibits his radical reaction to the conception of consciousness, and he tries to prove how consciousness is not an entity within pure experience.

I have already remarked that the main goal of James was to remove the classical distinction between mind and body. However, James does not present his view by taking this dualism for granted and then finding a solution to overcome it. Rather, he argues that it is a fault of philosophy to accept this distinction. James stresses upon that all that is real is experience, but experience enters into different contexts with regard to different relations of itself, because of these different relations we make a distinction by calling one of them mind or thoughts, the other body or things. Actually, there cannot be any reality other than experience for James. In this regard, the contextually differentiated relations of experience are the main source of our supposition that the mind and the external world are entirely different. In the beginning of his illustrious article, James points out the general understanding of this dualism around the concepts of thoughts and things; “Thoughts and things are the names for two sorts of object, which common sense will always find contrasted and will always practically oppose to each other.”¹⁵¹ Common sense accepts this difference and the main aim of this article is to demonstrate that it has no ground. He thinks that Kant, by his *transcendental ego*, is a turning point about the difference between thoughts and things, and he argues that by Kant’s conception

¹⁵¹ James, *Essays*, p. 1.

“the bipolar relation has been very much off its balance.”¹⁵² For James, after Kant, *transcendental ego* becomes everything for rationalists and nothing for empiricists.¹⁵³ Here, we can see that James again undermines his reaction to the priority of the understanding and the superiority of our mind or ego over the outer reality. In order to refuse this priority, he chooses a radical reaction to consciousness, and he argues that it “is on the point of disappearing altogether.”¹⁵⁴ Actually, “it is a name of nonentity, and has no right to a place among first principles.”¹⁵⁵ Moreover, he also maintains that there are already some thinkers who “seemed just on the point of abandoning the notion of consciousness.”¹⁵⁶ But there must be a more radical reaction to this concept and it is raised by James, by claiming that “the hour is ripe for it to be openly and universally discarded.”¹⁵⁷

However, after this rejection, he draws attention to that he only refuses the argument that consciousness stands for an entity, but he accepts that it stands for a function. “There is a function in experience which thoughts perform” and “this function is knowing.”¹⁵⁸ We must explain this function in order to reject consciousness as an entity. There is an important clarification that plays an imperative role in his rejection: Consciousness explains the fact that things not only are, but also get reported and known. I think that, this point is significant in the sense that by means of it James’s conception of reality comes into scene: Consciousness provides us the fact that something known and it reports that something exists, but it cannot be a cause of this existence. If we think this

¹⁵² *Ibid*, p. 1.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 1.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 2.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 2.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 3.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 3-4.

argument in relation to Descartes, thinking cannot be the cause of the existence of something. Hence, James is disagreeing with Descartes's principle, as he argues that the awareness of our thinking cannot prove the existence of something. In fact, thinking and knowing prove nothing in the realm of existence. When we know something we only know the existence of it, but our knowing cannot create its existence; because it already exists and by a conscious act we only know that it exists. Consequently, in this article, we can see James's main argument that thinking and knowing cannot be the cause of existence, and there is no causal relation between our knowing and the external things or there is no priority between them.

At the same time, he clearly registers his opposition to Descartes by pointing out that thought cannot be unextended. The substance of the external things is extension, and the thinking activity is the substance of our mind for Descartes. This argument is generally accepted by many philosophers after Descartes, and it reflects the substantial difference between thoughts and things. However, James states that "the two worlds differ, not by the presence or absence of extension, but by the relations of extension."¹⁵⁹ Descartes's division is 'absurd', since the division of subjective and objective extension is one of the relations of a context. Both thoughts and things have extension, but their division is dependent on the different relations of extension in experience. To argue that thought is unextended is meaningless, since our thoughts are also dependent on extension. For instance, James asks that "what possible meaning has it to say that, when we think of a foot-rule or a square yard, extension is not attributable to thought?"¹⁶⁰ In what condition can we distinguish our thought from extension? What can be the ground of the argument that thought is unextended in experience? There is nothing that we can think about without an extension. The objects of our thinking can also have

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 31.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 30.

extension, and their being in our thinking cannot be without extension. Accordingly, James answers that we cannot find any foundation of this distinction in experience, and consequently, he demonstrates the inconsistency of Cartesian distinction. Accordingly, he puts forward two main arguments about the distinction between thought and thing by saying that; there cannot be a causal relation between them, since one of them cannot be conceived as the product of the other. In addition, to formulate a distinction between them based on the distinction between thinking and extension is meaningless and baseless in the realm of pure experience.

The reaction to the causality between things and thoughts is connected with James's conception of experience. He clarifies that "experience has no such inner duplicity; and the separation of it into consciousness and content comes not by way of subtraction, but by way of addition."¹⁶¹ In this sense, experience cannot be differentiated, and the nature of experience includes no duplicity. We cannot subtract its content from consciousness, because the relations of knowing in experience can be explained with the argument that there are always new experiences in the flow of experience and the relations of knowing are dependent on that. As a result, to treat our experiences as they have twofold contents is only another experience, and it does imply no difference of quality in experience. At the same time, we cannot reduce the content into consciousness, since consciousness and its content cannot be differentiated in experience. In order to distinguish something from the other, we must assume a substantial difference. However, James's philosophy is against any argument of substance and the main stuff of his radical empiricism is experience. Accordingly, he does not perceive any substantial difference¹⁶² in experience, and for this reason thoughts and things are not

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 9.

¹⁶² This argument can be seen in the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze. In *Expressionism in Philosophy*, he argues that Descartes's distinction of mind and body cannot be a "real distinction", on the contrary it is a numerical distinction. It is "numerical", since it implies a quantitative distinction. It cannot be explained by means of the qualities of the mind or body. We know the existence of our mind more clearly, so it exists differently from the body. For Deleuze this argument implies no

different. There is one thing called experience, we call one of the side of it knower, and the other known. Furthermore, the position of knower and known is dependent on the different contexts of the same experience.

Does a given undivided portion of experience, taken in one context of associates, play the part of a knower, of a state of mind, of 'consciousness'; while in a different context the same undivided bit of experience plays the part of a thing known, of an 'objective' content.¹⁶³

Since the same thing can both be in different contexts at the same time, we can talk about the same thing in terms of its objective and subjective aspects. Apart from these different aspects of the same thing and beyond the relations of experience, a definite distinction between subject and object "falls into the outside of experience."¹⁶⁴ Within experience they are identical and to take up this problem within the realm of experience is economical and simple, since we can solve many problems resulting from this distinction. For instance, the representation of the object in our mind and the existence of it in the external world bring about an important problem, and the history of philosophy tackles with this question, since from the ancients: How can one identical thing be in two places at the same time? James solves this problem by arguing that, it is the same identical bit of experience, and we can take it up in different contexts. Its formation in our mind is the subjective fact of the same bit of experience, whereas its existence in the outer world is the objective fact of it. This is also related with pragmatism, since pragmatism offers us the way of taking things and facts in different contexts. However, before the relation between pragmatism and radical empiricism is articulated, it will be good to inquire into the other details of this article in order to elucidate James's account of consciousness.

quality and it is linked with a degree of knowledge so it is a numerical difference. Therefore, the fact that it is based on a degree of something justifies the argument that it is numerical and we cannot treat it as a real distinction. See also Deleuze's *Logic of Sense* and *Difference and Repetition*.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 10.

I stated that consciousness explains the fact that something exists and to be conscious of something means reporting the existence of it. Additionally, I clarified that James's thinking is closely connected with his conception of existence and experience, so I shall explain this connection here. In the following sections of this article, James explains that how the same experience can be in different contexts. First of all, this fact is related to the argument in the first part of the article that to be conscious of something means to report its existence. The fact that we know something cannot change the nature of object known. In other words, within experience James determines a realm of existence that we cannot touch by our consciousness or by our cognitive act. There is only experience of something and to formulate another realm of existence for this thing is baseless and unnecessary, since its other properties can be explained by the relations of experience;

Experience is a member of diverse processes that can be followed away from it along entirely different lines. The one self-identical thing has so many relations to the rest of experience that you can take it in disparate systems of association, and treat it as belonging with opposite contexts. In one of these contexts it is your 'field of consciousness'; in another it is 'the room in which you sit', and it enters both contexts in its wholeness, giving no pretext for being said to attach itself to consciousness by one of its parts or aspects, and to outer reality by another.¹⁶⁵

After these statements, James explains these two different contexts by an example of "the experience of the room". The reader's or the subject's personal biography is the first context of this experience. The second context is the history of the house which the room is part. The experience of the room is the last term of our sensations, emotions and classifications of it. At the same time, the same thing has many physical operations. It has different mental and physical operations in these two contexts, and the reconciliation of these operations is difficult. For instance, it may have existed for fifty years as a room, but as our field of consciousness "it may never have existed until now."¹⁶⁶ As a room, an earthquake can destroy it, but

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 13.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 14.

as a field of consciousness, closing our eyes is enough to end its existence. Therefore, mental existence of it cannot be compatible with its existence as a room in its history, so we cannot take it merely in one context. James concludes this example as follows;

If in short, you follow it in the mental direction, taking it along with events of personal biography solely, all sorts of things are true of it which are false, and false of it which are true if you treat it as a real thing experienced, follow it in the physical direction, and relate it to associates in the outer world.¹⁶⁷

In this sense, to treat it only in one context causes some wrong and insufficient conclusions about its existence. In order to avoid them, we should consider its existence in relation to both mental and physical aspects in experience.

In order to expound his approach to this distinction, James also deals with the counter arguments and the possible obstacles that contradict his thinking. He takes up the problem of mental facts that seems far from their experiential roots, such as memories, emotions, conceptual manifolds. He calls them “non-perceptual experiences” and he touches upon the problem of the objectivity of them. To him, this problem is joined with abstraction. Thus, we abstract single non-perceptual experience from perceptions and we “treat them” as if they are “wholly constituted of the stuff called consciousness, using this term now for a kind of entity,”¹⁶⁸ but as I have disclosed already, he maintains that he does not acknowledge the existence of consciousness as an entity and there cannot be anything that is constituted by consciousness alone. We treat the same thing as if it has two distinct realities, but we wrongly attribute independent realities to thoughts and things. In pure experience, there is no such difference, but for practical purposes we differentiate thoughts and things. However, to consider things only in their conceptual manifolds cannot give us the real existence of thing; “taking them in this way first, we confine the problem to a world merely thought-of and not

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 15.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 17.

directly felt or seen”.¹⁶⁹ At this point, the immediacy of experience and “feeling warm” in knowing are significant. These characteristics of James’s thinking have an important role in his understanding of knowledge. He argues that conceptual manifolds have a functional role in knowledge, that they are short-cuts and snapshots. For this reason, they function when the immediacy in experience is broken, or when the objects felt are no more accessible. It is also impossible to think something only through concepts, since its meaning is experience-dependent in James. Although, concepts are short-cuts and they function when the immediacy of experience is broken, they are added to experience. Hence, it cannot be said that James is completely against conceptualization or intellectualism. In fact, he wants to emphasize that there is a wrong assumption that concepts are the sole and absolute existence of things and they are independent from their experiential roots. Though they break the immediacy of experience, we should not forget that they cannot be differentiated from experience entirely, since the process of conceptualization is another experience. This attitude can be seen in his reaction to vicious intellectualism in *Some Problems of Philosophy*.¹⁷⁰ In addition to this, to take things up only in their perceptual or conceptual contexts is impossible; since the world of concepts “just like the world of percepts comes to us at first as a chaos of experiences, but lines of order soon get traced”¹⁷¹. Thus, by differentiating the experienced and the act of experiencing, we attribute experience a twofold meaning; James summarizes this fact as follows;

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 16.

¹⁷⁰ William James, *Some Problems of Philosophy*. James argues that Hegel is a vicious intellectualist in *Some Problems of Philosophy*. He is also arguing with some Hegelisms at this point. According to James, to exaggerate the conceptual meaning of something and to ignore its experiential roots is vicious-intellectualism. And such an approach is unnecessary and wrong in the sense that it results with some many problems about the duplicity of existence of something and the immediacy of thought and experience. This approach also is the common perspective which he shares with Bergson. However, both the meaning of vicious-intellectualism and anti-intellectualisms of James and Bergson have some critical points. There are some competing arguments about this matter. See also the article of Walter Pitkin, “James and Bergson: Or, Who is Against Intellect”.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 16.

Abstracting, then, from percepts altogether, what I maintain is, that any single non-perceptual experience tends to get counted twice over, just as a perceptual experience does, figuring in one context as an object or field of objects, in another as a state of mind: and all this without the least internal self-diremption on its own part into consciousness and content. It is all consciousness in one taking; and, in the other, all content.¹⁷²

As it can be inferred from the quotation, the two sides of experience are originated from the abstraction of the experienced thing from the act of experiencing. If we look at this problem within experience, we can notice that there is no such difference in this act. So if we go back to the example of the room; “just as the seen room is also a field of consciousness, so the conceived or recollected room is also a state of mind; and the doubling of the experience has in both cases similar grounds”¹⁷³. James argues that to think that room within the associations of its own history and the reader’s history can solve the problem of its two existences that is deeply differentiated by Cartesian thinking. Actually,

We call the first collection of the system of external realities, in the midst of which the room, as ‘real’ exists; the other we call the stream of our internal thinking, in which, as a ‘mental image’, it for a moment floats.¹⁷⁴

Just as the attempt of fusing the external realities and the mental concepts of them into the stream of thought, James again wants to demonstrate the sameness of them within experience in the second perspective of radical empiricism. To see the different relations of something can provide us a more comprehensive view about its existence and this view shows us that;

It plays two different roles, being *Gedanke* and *Gedachtes*, the thought of an object, and the object-thought-of, both in one; and all this without paradox or mystery, just as the same material thing may be both low and high, or small or great, or bad and good, because of its relations to opposite parts of an environing world.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² *Ibid*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 22.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 21-22.

Then, James summarizes the identity of the thing (the identity of the object-of-thought and the thought-of-objects or the identity of the subjective aspect and the objective fact) within experience as follows;

As 'subjective' we say that the experience represents; as 'objective' it is represented. What represents and what is represented is here numerically the same; but we must remember that no dualism of being represented and representing resides in the experience *per se*. In its pure state, or when isolated, there is no self-splitting of it into consciousness and what the consciousness is 'of'. Its subjectivity and objectivity are functional attributes solely, realized only when the experience is 'taken', i. e., talked-of, twice, considered along with its two differing contexts respectively, by a new retrospective experience, of which that whole past complication now forms the fresh content.¹⁷⁶

As a consequence of showing the two parts of experience James thinks that his thesis becomes much more clear;

Consciousness connotes a kind of external relations and does not denote a kind of a special stuff or way of being. The peculiarity of our experiences that they not only are, but are known, with their 'conscious' quality is invoked to explain, is better explained by their relations –these relations themselves being experiences- to one another.¹⁷⁷

I think that James's innovative concept of existence is connected with his rejection of consciousness as a way of being. Consciousness can exist only with its function of knowing. Furthermore, this function of it cannot be isolated from the thing known. Knowing, existing, existing as a field of consciousness and as a field of external object cannot be differentiated substantially. They differ in the relations of experience. We cannot differentiate them by means of the levels of knowledge or the priority of knowing, since knowledge is already a relation of experience. In order to clarify the ambiguity concerning the distinction of subject and object, it is reasonable to deny the existence of consciousness. However one could ask why James did not choose the way of denying the external reference. In fact, the existence of external reference will cause some problems for his philosophy, since

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 23.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 25.

he is also accused of being a solipsist and I shall explore these critics in a following section, but here I want to question his refusal of consciousness. James argues that if consciousness does not exist as an entity, he can show that it also cannot be a precursor of something that exists. In other words, to attribute such an existence to consciousness means to elevate the conceptual manifolds over the perceptual existences of things. James wants to avoid this fact in order for knowledge to be intimate. As I have remarked before, the intimacy and the immediacy of knowledge are important characteristics of his philosophy. Moreover, he uses this intention for demonstrating the inconsistency of Cartesian dualism. Descartes begins his philosophy by an abstraction, and he abstracts knowledge from existence; after him this division is accepted by many thinkers. By rejecting this division, James wants to prove that thinking cannot be an indication of existence and there cannot be a causal relation between thinking and existence, and also there cannot be any causality between our thoughts and external things. He emphasizes this argument also in “What is Emotion” and *Principles*. Instead of a sign of being, thinking should be an indication of our way of establishing an intimate relation to the external world. However, the meaning of knowledge and the conception of existence become suspicious here, since thinking and conceptualizing seems also an obstacle in the immediacy and intimacy of our relation to external world. At this point, James’s epistemology has some problems in terms of solipsism, agnosticism and intellectualism. I shall elaborate them in the following sections. Now, I want to emphasize the relation between *Principles* and *Essays* in terms of the existence of consciousness.

Although at some points there are some differences in James’s two works, I think that in terms of his intentions and the general framework of his philosophy, we can see the consistency of his thinking. In *Principles* he wants to elaborate the “stream of thought” and to show that our thought has a self-subsistent and incessant flow. A new thought can be appropriated in this flow by means of the capacity of the flow itself. While stressing upon the ceaseless stream of thought James maintains

that “there is no place for spirituality in this flow”¹⁷⁸. This argument is compatible with the refusal of consciousness in *Essays*, since he rejects the spiritual and entitative existence of consciousness in “Does Consciousness Exist?”. James argues that the stream of thought flows on its own responsibility and consciousness –if it exists at all- cannot be the manager of it. By removing such a controller or manager, he chooses the way of explaining our relation to external world in the stream of thought and does not recognize any duplicity in this stream. Similar to this approach, in *Essays* he argues that the division of thought and thing is coalesced within experience, and there is no absolute division between them. They are not made up of different stuffs, since the stuff of our mind and the stuff of external world are fused into experience. In order to clear out his thesis, he also mentions the difficulty of distinguishing the data that come from sensations and from the capacity of our mind.¹⁷⁹

How, if ‘subject’ and ‘object’ were separated ‘by the whole diameter of being’, and had no attributes in common, could it be so hard to tell, in a presented and organized material object, what parts come in through the sense-organs and what part comes ‘out of one’s own head’? Sensations and apperceptive ideas fuse here so intimately that you can no more tell where one begins and the other ends, than you can tell, in those cunning circular panoramas that have lately been exhibited, where the real foreground and the pointed canvas join together.¹⁸⁰

Descartes’s criteria for their substantial difference have no foundation, since we cannot differentiate our thoughts from the extension. James wants to show that both our thoughts and external things are extended and cannot be abstracted from their extension in “Does Consciousness Exist?”. However, to take up something as if it has only extension or only abstracted from its extension is baseless and insufficient. This wrong approach brings forth many problems that are unnecessary in philosophy. In his celebrated article James mainly tries to put

¹⁷⁸ James, *Principles*, vol., I, from the first sections of the book this argument can be inferred.

¹⁷⁹ He also points out this fact in *Principles*. In the first section of this book he maintains the difficulty of the notion of sensation. I will explicate this problem in the following chapter of this thesis in relation to classical empiricism.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, vol., I, pp. 29-30.

forward this argument. However, he does not think that before his argument there is a distinction between mind and body, and he that can solve it by means of emphasizing experience. He presents his thesis for demonstrating how this distinction is invalid. It results from our considering the same thing as if it has two distinct existences. Nevertheless, this consideration takes us far away from the experiential and intimate roots of knowledge. I will explain the relation of his conception of intimacy and his emphasis on experience in the following paragraph.

To sum up, to show us the obscurity of Cartesian dualism and to refuse the existence of consciousness as an entity are the main purposes of “Does Consciousness Exist?”. Consciousness does not exist, since we cannot have any clear and distinct ground of its existence in experience. This argument is about James’s conception of reality; he perceives experience as the only reality. Only this reality exists, and the division of this reality as consciousness and its object results from a wrong assumption. Namely, we cannot consider reality as it is independent from mind, since we can only conceive it through the relation of our mind and its object. The sameness of the mind and the object is originated from the fact that they cannot exist independent from each other. Actually, to know something means breaking down the immediacy of experience. The emphasis of James on experience is for keeping the intimacy of knowledge. However, by knowing we conceptualize the experienced thing and we abstract it from the flow of pure experience. On the contrary, abstracting it from this flow is peculiar to our activity of knowing or the knowing function of consciousness. In reality, this abstraction is impossible. In other words, in James’s conception of reality, consciousness cannot be abstracted from the flow of experience. That amounts to say that, a consciousness that is differentiated from its object cannot exist in James’s thinking, and this is linked with his conception of reality and existence. The dependency of reality on our mind is connected with the fact that our mind is an important part of experience. In other words, experience is not a relation that

our mind establishes between itself and the external world. If we attribute an active role to our mind in this relation, we fall into an absurdity. That is, since we already think and know through this relation, to assume our mind as a very distinct entity independent from this relation is a mistake and it cannot be justified. James calls these relations as relations of experience, and he recognizes experience as the only reality. We cannot be and think out of this reality, however, in thinking and knowing we choose the way of abstracting it from the immediate flow of experience. This abstraction is a function of knowing, and since we abstract experience by means of knowing we can talk about existence from the point of our mind. To think consciousness as the function of knowing does not mean that in reality there are two different realities, that is consciousness and its object. Therefore, consciousness may help us in acquiring clear and distinct knowledge, but it cannot be an indicator of a clear and distinct existence. Its function of thinking can be explained by the relations of pure experience, but this function cannot be a proof for its existence. For the existence of something whether it is known or not is not important, so we cannot think and infer some arguments as if thinking can be an important sign of existence. Thinking, knowing, and the subjective and objective facts can be explained in the relations of experience. The division of them into two substances cannot be proved with any arguments. Accordingly, the non-entity of consciousness is mainly connected with his conception of experience. Having accepted experience as the primary stuff of philosophy, James argues that experience is immediate, whole and fluent; “experience in its immediacy seems perfectly fluent.”¹⁸¹ It has no owner similar to the stream of thought, so it is pure and immanent to itself. We can see this fact that experience has no owner also in James’s examples, since he pays attention to call his examples as “the experience of the room” and “the experience of a pen”. The immediacy of experience dissolves when we try to cognize it. In cognition and knowing of experience, the subjective and objective contexts are differentiated,

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 92.

but the nature of experience is self-subsistent in itself. In such a conception of experience, there is no place for consciousness as an entity in philosophy.

However, there are some problems about the fluency and immediacy of experience that is criticized by many thinkers. He considers that our relation to experience is intimate, and the conceptual framework of experience is another experience to be added to first. Nevertheless, conceptualization also changes the immediacy of it as I mentioned in the paragraph above, since it makes us far away from experience and it breaks the immediacy of experience. By conceptualizing we restrict the realm of experience and we become conscious of it. It is an important difficulty that James's philosophy confronts; this difficulty comes from his main intention. I have already stated that "feeling warm" is one of the main purposes of his thinking. In order to keep this warmth and intimacy, he underlines that experience is pure. He both wants to reflect the varieties of experience and our direct relation of experience and to explain it in knowledge. This point endangers his epistemology, because such an intimacy may not be established in knowing. It implies a private and confidential relation with experience or the pure flow of life, but its reflection in knowledge is difficult to explain. James makes a distinction here, as perceptual and conceptual knowledge, or knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge about. Knowledge by acquaintance reveals the immediacy of knowledge, or perceptual knowledge that is not conceptualized. On the contrary knowledge-about something means its conceptualization. He utters this distinction; "there are two ways of knowing things, knowing them immediately or intuitively, and knowing them conceptually or representatively."¹⁸² I clarified that conceptualization is a second experience added to the pure experience of something. By conceptualizing retrospection also comes into scene, and "only in the later experience that is this naïf immediacy retrospectively split into two parts, a 'consciousness' and 'its content'."¹⁸³ For the knowledge of something, the

¹⁸² James, *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 43.

history of our mind and the history of things are important as he stated before. Since these histories are also relations of experience, he explains all knowledge by means of the relations of experience. In order to make explicit the changes and relations of our past and present experience, James uses similar phrases that he uses for the flow of thought. He calls our attention to the argument that the construction of knowledge is not a continuous and static process. The life-span of knowledge is based on its appropriation of other things in the stream of knowing. He explained the stream of thought by means of steeping or dying in *Principles*. Now in *Pragmatism*, in a similar way he enlightens the establishment of knowledge by means of cooking or stewing;

Our minds thus grow in spots; and like grease-spots, the spots spread. But we let them spread as little as possible; we keep unaltered as much of our old knowledge, as many of our old prejudices and beliefs, as we can. We patch and tinker more than we renew. The novelty soaks in; it stains the ancient mass; but it is also tinged by what absorbs it. our past apperceives and co-operates; and in the new equilibrium in which each step forward in the process of learning terminates, it happen relatively seldom the new fact is added to raw. More usually it is embedded cooked, as one might say, stewed down in the sauce of the old.¹⁸⁴

Therefore, our knowledge is depended on the appropriation of new thoughts with the old ones. Retrospection is significant in the establishment of our knowledge in this context. After this clarification in the same article “Pragmatism and Common Sense”, James illuminates his thesis concerning our way of thinking and knowing in relation to functional role of common sense as follows;

My thesis now is this, that *our fundamental ways of thinking about things are discoveries of exceedingly remote ancestors, which have been able to preserve themselves throughout the experience of all subsequent time.* They form one great stage of equilibrium in the human mind's development, the stage of *common sense*. Other stages have grafted themselves upon this stage, but have never succeeded in displacing it.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ James, *Essays*, p. 75.

¹⁸⁴ James, *Pragmatism*, p. 113.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 65.

Common sense and concepts have functional roles in our knowing. Conversely, James wants to remind us the fact that, though they are important in knowing the main purpose of our knowledge is feeling warm and we can endow with this purpose by means of percepts, not with concepts. He clears out that the only reality that we directly know is sensations or the matters-of-acquaintance. However, the history of thought substitutes them with conceptual signs. Although the main aim of our thinking and “higher thought” is finding and achieving matters-of-acquaintance, we use also conceptual signs in order to commune. James sums up these arguments in *The Meaning of Truth* as follows;

Through nothing but the mutual resemblance of those of our perceptual feelings which have this power of modifying one another, *which are mere dumb knowledges-of-acquaintance*, and which must also resemble their realities or not know them aright at all. In such pieces of knowledge-of-acquaintance all our knowledge-about must end, and carry a sense of this possible termination as part of its content. These percepts, these *termini*, these sensible things, these mere matters-of-acquaintance, are the only realities we ever directly know, and the whole history of our thought is the history of our substitution of one of them for another and the reduction of the substitute to the status of a conceptual sign. Contemned though they be by some thinkers, these sensations are the motherearth, the anchorage, the stable rock, the first and last limits, the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* of the mind. To find such sensational *termini* should be our aim with all our higher thought. They end discussion; they destroy the false conceit of knowledge; and without them we are all at sea with each other's meaning.¹⁸⁶

Accordingly, concepts are used for communication and common sense has a function in our knowing. As a result, as stated above James distinguishes knowing-by acquaintance and knowing about; knowing-by acquaintance is knowing by percepts and knowing about is knowing by concepts. He uses this difference in clarifying the difficulty of expressing the immediacy of knowledge and also avoiding the problem of solipsism. It is difficult to reflect the immediacy of knowledge, since in knowing we also conceptualize the object known. Although there cannot be such a division in reality, in the process of knowing, we

¹⁸⁶ James, *The Meaning of Truth*, pp. 38-39.

use this abstraction. Besides, if there were not any abstraction and the knowledge-about, our several minds could not commune with each other. In other words, they commune and share their knowledge through knowledge-about or conceptual knowledge. These explanations of knowledge-about and the functional role of common sense are connected with the criticisms of solipsism and realism. Although he wants to overcome these critics by this division, he could not escape them. In this section I explained the framework of pure experience and James's rejection of consciousness as an entity. I said that from the perspective of *Essays*, there is no place for consciousness as a distinct being, but there is no place of objective reference either. The problem of objective reference gives birth to the criticism of solipsism and realism. Meanwhile, I want to emphasize that there is not a big difference between *Principles* and *Essays* in terms of James's understanding of consciousness. My main problem about the activity or passivity of it can be seen in both perspectives. I tried to explain this problem linked with the selectivity of stream of thought in *Principles*, besides about the rejection of consciousness in *Essays* there are some criticisms argue that James did not prove the non-existence of consciousness.¹⁸⁷ In order to elaborate James's general framework, and the place of consciousness in the frame of pure experience, it will be good to portray these criticisms here sequentially, since they imply important characteristics of his thinking.

3.3 THE PROBLEM OF SOLIPSISM

Apart from rejecting the distinction of mind and body, "keeping the immediacy of knowledge", and "feeling warm" are the other characteristics of James's thinking. The demand of keeping immediacy of life leads him to a humanistic temperament in philosophy. He takes up the conception of humanism as the subjective contribution to knowledge. The knower and the known are immanent to each other

¹⁸⁷ This critic is raised by Bode in "Consciousness and its Object". It is connected with the critics of solipsism and realism and I shall clear out them in following sections.

in the realm of pure experience and on the basis of pure experience the subjective contribution to reality and knowledge cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, by this way of philosophizing he is accused of solipsism, since “the fact that the same numerically identical pure experience can enter simultaneously into many conscious contexts”¹⁸⁸ causes a problem in terms of solipsism. The most important criticism about solipsistic tendency of his philosophy comes from Dickinson Sergeant Miller and Boyd Henry Bode.¹⁸⁹ I think that this problem is important in clarifying his account of consciousness, and it will be worthwhile to elucidate it here.

The classical definition of solipsism is that “I am the only mind which exists” and it limits the meaning of whole existence in the boundaries of the existence of “my mind”. In other words, solipsism argues that existence of the objects and the existence of the other minds are dependent on the existence of my mind. Miller and Bode criticize James as being a solipsist. The objections of Miller and Bode are mainly founded upon the nature of the field of consciousness and the place of space relations in the existence of objective reference. In *Principles*, James puts a stress upon the unity of conscious states and states that each field of consciousness is essentially a unit.¹⁹⁰ In “Pure Experience and External World”, Bode questions this argument. The space relations are significant in the unities of conscious states, “since the perceptions of space there may be a numerical identity.”¹⁹¹ The numerical identity of the objects known is dependent on the space relations in

¹⁸⁸ James, *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 124.

¹⁸⁹ Bode raised his criticisms in many articles. Boyd Henri Bode, “Some Recent Definitions of Consciousness”, “Pure Experience and the External World”, “Cognitive Experience and its Object”. Some of these articles are included in *Pure Experience: The Response to William James* edited and introduced by Eugene Taylor and Robert H. Wozniak. Miller did not publish his criticism, but he wrote it in a letter to Ralph Barton Perry. His critics can be read in Perry’s *The Thought and Character of William James. Pure Experience: The Response to William James* includes an article of Miller, “Naïve Realism; What is it?”.

¹⁹⁰ James, *Principles*, vol., I, from “Stream of Thought” and *Essays*, p. 180.

¹⁹¹ Bode, “Pure Experience and the External World”, p. 132.

Principles.¹⁹² However, Bode calls attention to different perspectives of space relations and argues that James confuses the geometrical space and psychological space, and he asks that “is it not true that, the perceptions of space are, psychologically considered, every bit as different as are perceptions of object?”¹⁹³ That amounts to say that space relations differ from one recipient to another, and they cannot construct the existence of objective reference. James must demonstrate that “points in [one’s] experience which are not simply precisely similar to, but numerically identical with, corresponding points in the experience of other percipients”¹⁹⁴ in order to rescue his radical empiricism from solipsism. To be precise, Bode’s question amounts to asking that “how one unit of consciousness can be communicated with others” or “how one piece of experience can commune with other’s experiences”. Bode’s criticism is not only related to the problem of solipsism, but it is also in conjunction with the existence of objective reference for one field of consciousness. That is to say, if every field of experience or consciousness is a unit, the connection of these unities in one field also brings forward a problem. As a result, pragmatism “tacitly postulates an object of reference which lies beyond the experience of the individual”¹⁹⁵. This argument contradicts James’s target of not giving any reference to a trans-empirical reality. Mark Moller clarifies Miller-Bode objections in “James, Perception and Miller-Bode Objections”. Moller maintains that James did not try to explain Bode’s criticism. However, he made some modifications in his philosophy. He “rejects intellectualistic logic, allows mental states to compound, and turns to panpsychism in *A Pluralistic Universe*. He was forced to make these modifications to respond to Miller’s and Bode’s objections.”¹⁹⁶ I shall explain these modifications not by

¹⁹² *Principles*, vol. II, pp. 148-153.

¹⁹³ Bode, “Pure Experience and the External World”, p. 132.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 131-132.

¹⁹⁵ Bode, “Cognitive Experience and Its Objects”, p. 662.

¹⁹⁶ Mark Moller, “James, Perception and Miller-Bode Objections”, p. 625.

referring to panpsychism but by stressing upon the understanding of existence in James. Before these explanations, I want to clarify that I do not see any big change in James. To clarify the problem of solipsism with the meaning of existence, I shall offer a solution to the problem of the existence of consciousness also.

How an object can be same for one field of consciousness and for other fields within pure and immediate flow of experience is the fundamental challenge of James's critics. The immediacy and purity of experience is significant for his conception of existence, since experience is the sole reality in his philosophy. James touches upon the identity of object experienced and the experience itself¹⁹⁷ in his philosophy in order to keep the immediacy and purity of experience. He does not mention the identity of the subject and object, since he tries to construct their virtual existence within pure experience. Instead of emphasizing the identity of subject and object, he prefers to mention the different sides of the same thing in order to construct a philosophy within experience, and he begins his philosophy with this postulation. Following from this method, he asks the main problems of philosophy from a different perspective. Instead of the ontological status of an object and the subject, he tries to solve this problem from the viewpoint of "how two minds can know one thing"¹⁹⁸. It is good to emphasize that he questions the knowability of "one" thing, not the "same" thing, since he argues that although there are many knower of one thing, its oneness cannot dissolve. Accordingly, many different perceivers cannot change its oneness and existence. His main argument in tackling with this problem is that the experience itself and the awareness by the individuals that the experience is their own are different.¹⁹⁹ This difference between 'to be experienced' and 'to be' seems to be capable of rescuing him from solipsism charge at first sight. He gives a different meaning to 'existence'

¹⁹⁷ James, *Essays*, pp. 92-122.

¹⁹⁸ This is one of the articles of *Essays in Radical Empiricism*.

¹⁹⁹ James, *Essays*, p. 132.

in the realm of experience. Thus he argues that the thing which wants to keep its sameness from the perspectives of all minds is the thing which we are conscious of it.²⁰⁰ However, the thing which we are conscious of is not the sole reality of this thing. In this context, James says that he does not make existence to be dependent upon “to be experienced” or “to be known”.

The difference between ‘to be’ and ‘to be experienced’ solves many problems in James’s philosophy. First of all, the question of how all the perceivers can experience the same object, if their experiences and the objects are identical, can be solved. James replies this question by saying that they perceive the same object but the existence of the same object is not dependent on their perceptions. The other problem is about the existence of other minds; “at the level of immediate experience how we can think that many individuals perceive the same pen or how can be aware of their perceptions and their existences.”²⁰¹ This can be answered again by means of the difference between ‘to be aware’ and ‘to be’ in the sense that to be aware of other minds does not prove their existences.

Above all, his different conception of existence requires an explanation in replying the objections of solipsism and in explaining his way of philosophy. He does not think that existence is a predicate of an object; in the sense that when we say that ‘a thing exists’, we do not attribute something to it as different from it. Consequently, he tries to avoid the problem of abstraction in expressing the meaning of existence. Besides, he makes a distinction between ‘to be aware of something’ and ‘to be’, and by this way he tries to keep the immediacy of pure experience. Here, his ontology and epistemology are combined. This is an important difficulty for clarifying his philosophy. This difficulty also results from his understanding of objective reference in radical empiricism. For him, “it is a *that*, an Absolute, a

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, pp.132-133.

²⁰¹ James, *Essays*, p. 124.

‘pure’ experience on an enormous scale, undifferentiated and undifferentiable into thought and thing.”²⁰² According to this quotation, we can see that the definition of an objective reference in radical empiricism is problematic, because James wants to show that from a radical perspective of empiricism an objective reference cannot be isolated from all conscious acts. Nevertheless, we also should not forget that the existence of something cannot be dependent on cognition entirely. A thing cannot be differentiated from its cognitive meaning, but at the same time cognition cannot restrict its meaning. This problem is originated from our division of thing and the consciousness of it. We begin our questioning from this division and we try to find an absolute existence for the things and thoughts. James explains this fact as follows;

Since the acquisition of conscious quality on the part of an experience depends upon a context coming to it, it follows that the sum total of all experiences, having no contexts cannot be strictly be called conscious at all²⁰³

He reminds us the fact that conceptualization of something is also an experience and claims that the sum total of experiences cannot be called conscious at all. Their being is not dependent on cognition entirely, since the existence of experience cannot be explained as a completely conscious act. It is experience of something and the experiencing act and the object of experience are identical. It is pure, since it is only identified with the act of experiencing not the subject of it. It is immanent to itself, since it is the first and last reality in the flow of experience. There is no owner of it and it needs no ground in order to exist as other than itself. It is whole, since a new experience can be added to it, but cannot change of its existence. It is difficult to solve the problem of “how the whole is experienced when each finite individual only experiences a part of it.”²⁰⁴ While each finite individual experiencing a part of it, the addition and the continuity of experiences can occur

²⁰² James, *Essays*, p. 134.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 134.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 124.

with the appropriation in the flow of pure experience. Furthermore, this appropriation comes about by the flow itself, not by a knower. Experience goes on like the stream of thought but this going is immanent to itself. Hence, the act of experiencing by many recipients cannot change its wholeness and unity. Its whole and unique being can carry on while many knowers experience it. The oneness of it cannot change. In the last section of “How two minds can know one thing”, James tries to clarify this problem with ‘so many little absolutes.’²⁰⁵ The flow of experience is not absolute itself, since new experiences can be added to it, but these experiences are absolute in themselves; since they are added to the flow by means of their capacity of appropriation and they need no ground or no active subject in order exist in this flow.

According to Mark Moller, James had to modify his philosophy in order to defend it against the objections of solipsism. Moller’s argument is dependent on James’s conception of perception. He claims that in the direction of these critics, James develops an understanding of direct perception.²⁰⁶ He begins emphasizing the identity of object perceived and the experience of the object. Additionally, consciousness is the other important concept that James had made important modifications. These modifications lasted till the rejection of it completely in *Essays*. However, I think that James’s different conception of existence is important in his reply against this criticism. The rejection of consciousness and the identity of experience and object experienced can be seen in the flow of thought too. His conception of existence is connected with his refusal of mind and body, since he argues that they have no substantial differences and their existence can be explained in experience. As I mentioned before, this problem is associated with the second perspective in *Essays* through which James dissolves this duality. While dissolving it in experience, he chooses the way of making experience pure and self-

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p.134.

²⁰⁶ Moller, “James, Perception and Miller-Bode Objections”.

subsistent, and he rejects the existence of consciousness as an entity. The existence of consciousness as a stream of thought is compatible with the non-entity of it, in the sense that in *Principles* he also accentuates that there cannot be any seat for an active spirituality in the flow of thought.

The problem of solipsism is important in James's thinking, in the sense that because of the immediacy of thinking, the objective reference is problematic. However, I relate it to his conception of existence. The existence of things for many minds is important for James, since he wants to avoid relativism or skepticism also.²⁰⁷ Moreover, if one mind constructs a reality that is immanent to itself and its external reality causes the problem of solipsism. In this sense, we have to accept that this mind is completely an active being and cannot share the same reality with others. However, James does not want such a relativist approach, because he also wants to be a realist. Realism is important for his philosophy in the sense that although he argues that he presents only a method and a way of solving philosophical problems, his radical empiricism paves a way to a new metaphysics. He wants to be a realist, since he wants to recognize the other minds in the realm of existence. As I stated before, his conception of existence cannot be mind-dependent in the sense that to be 'conscious' of this existence cannot be the cause of it, and cannot be predicated to it, and also, cannot touch upon or change its existence. In this regard, existence also is self-subsistent, but not absolute and completely independent from our mind since it is experience-dependent. Here, again consciousness has both active and passive modes of existence. It is active, since existence is dependent on its experiences and these experiences are immediate. It is passive, since existence cannot be brought out via the act of cognition. In this sense, the problem about the ownerless and independent stream of thought can be seen in the ownerless and independent stream of experience. Consequently, the immediacy of pure experience and different streams of thought for every subject

²⁰⁷ In *Essays*, he points out the character of radical empiricism against skepticism and agnosticism. He also defines his philosophy as epistemological realism.

causes the problem of realism and the existence of objective reference, and this point is also criticized by some thinkers.

3.4 THE DILEMMA OF REALISM

“Realism is the doctrine that the same objects that are known by some one may continue to exist when they are not known by any one.”²⁰⁸ This definition implies the fact that in order for something to be real, it does not need a mind to be conscious of its existence. Namely, reality must be mind-dependent according to the classical theories of reality. If we accept this perspective, it is difficult to argue that James is a realist. To think that reality is completely independent from our mind is a big error, since in such a way of thinking, first we decide that reality must be out of our sensations and cognition, and then we claim that it is independent from our mind. This difficulty results from that in fixing our mind how our cognition has a role in the establishment of reality, our cognition has already being used. In this regard, we cannot look at or comprehend reality out of our cognition. After this assumption, to act as if there is a reality beyond our experiences is a much more naïve argument than radical empiricism offers for James. In addition to this, he also thinks that the concept of “correspondence” in ordinary epistemology is vague and abstract. Instead of assuming two distinct existences as mind and reality, a pragmatist epistemologist “posits there a reality and a mind with ideas.” In that sense, the right question is “what can make those ideas true of that reality?” At this point, James argues that “the pragmatist insists on being more concrete” and instead of an abstract and vague concept of “correspondence”, pragmatist asks “what such an agreement may mean in detail”. “Satisfaction” comes into scene in determining the meaning of this agreement, but James thinks that although satisfaction includes a subjective contribution and may lead relativity, he considers his conception of satisfaction is not an abstract

²⁰⁸ This definition belongs to W. P. Montague “May a Realist be a Pragmatist”.

satisfaction and this fact may rescue his pragmatism from anti-realist criticisms.

He explains the position of a pragmatist in terms of satisfaction as follows;

He finds first that the ideas must point to or lead towards that reality and no other, and then that the pointings and leadings must yield satisfaction as their result. So far the pragmatist is hardly less abstract than the ordinary slouch epistemologist; but as he defines himself farther, he grows more concrete. The entire quarrel of the intellectualist with him is over his concreteness, intellectualism contending that the vaguer and more abstract account is here the more profound. The concrete pointing and leading are conceived by the pragmatist to be the work of other portions of the same universe to which the reality and the mind belong, intermediary verifying bits of experience with which the mind at one end, and the reality at the other, are joined. The 'satisfaction' in turn, is no abstract satisfaction überhaupt, felt by an unspecified being, but is assumed to consist of such satisfactions as concretely existing men actually do find in their beliefs.²⁰⁹

To be precise, James's realism embraces two facts that complete each other related to anti-abstractionism. First of all, for a pragmatizing epistemologist the conceptions of reality and a mind with ideas are not absolute and distinct, since he considers the problem "what can make those ideas true of that reality?" The concept of "that reality" is important, since it reflects anti-abstractionism of James. The second important fact of James's realism is his rejection of agnosticism. It is again connected with his anti-abstractionism, since he thinks that "skepticism, positivism and agnosticism agree with ordinary dogmatic rationalism in presupposing that everybody knows what the word 'truth' means, without further explanation."²¹⁰ In that sense, both truth and reality is not abstract in James's pragmatism, he is against the gap between two independent abstract realities and unknowable character of reality and an abstract concept of truth. How can we believe that reality is away from us, while our cognition has an important role in our relation to it? Here, James criticizes the partisans of absolute reality in this way;

²⁰⁹ James, *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 191.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 182.

How does the partisan of absolute reality know what this orders him to think? He cannot direct sight of the absolute; and he has no means of guessing what it wants of him except by following the humanistic clues. The only truth that he himself will ever practically accept will be that to which his finite experiences lead him of themselves...

All the sensations of a law of truth lie in the very texture of experience. Absolute or not absolute, the concrete truth for us will always be that way of thinking in which our various experiences most profitably combine.²¹¹

He considers that to presume a completely mind-independent reality lead us to an absolute conception of reality, since such a reality cannot be subject to anything and cannot change. However, it also cannot be knowable; how can we know or at least talk about a reality that is deeply far away from us? We think as if such a reality can occur and we can know it in spite of its absoluteness and distinctness from us, and then we wait for its agreement with our ideas. This is impossible for James, and in this manner, his conception of reality cannot be compatible with correspondence theory of truth. He maintains an agreement with reality, but it is different from the correspondence of two very different realms;

To 'agree' in the widest sense with a reality can...mean...to be put into such working touch with it as to handle either it or something connected with it better than if we disagreed...Any idea that helps us to deal, whether practically or intellectually, with either the reality or its belongings, that does not entangle our progress in frustrations, that fits, in fact and adapts our life to the reality's whole setting [is true].²¹²

For the problem of 'agreement', his pragmatism comes into scene, since if an idea helps us practically or intellectually, then it is true for James. In this sense, his conception of agreement is not compatible with classical corresponding theory of truth. In contradistinction to this argument, the meaning of knowledge and reality is suspicious in this theory for James;

...duplication and coincidence, are they knowledge? The gun shows which q it points to and hits, by breaking it. until the feeling can show us which q it points to and knows, by some equally flagrant token, why are we not free to deny that it either points to and knows any one of the real

²¹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 46-47.

²¹² James, *Pragmatism*, p. 102.

q's at all, and to affirm that the word 'resemblance' exhaustively describes its relation to the reality?²¹³

In the quotation, James uses the concept of feeling for ideas or thoughts, and points out the fact that this feeling cannot be distinguished from its object and also its cognition. Again he talks about the sameness of the thought and thing. In order to prove this sameness or agreement, there is no need to articulate a reality which is independent from cognition and mind. We think that there must be something outside of our subjective contributions or feelings in order for something to be real;

If the content of the feeling itself, and perish with the feeling common usage refuses to call it a reality, and brands it as a subjective feature of the feeling's constitution, or at the most as the feeling's dream.²¹⁴

James supposes that there is no need for an outside independent reality from the feeling itself. In order to demonstrate this argument in "The Function of Cognition", he tries to prove the impossibility of separating a feeling and the cognition of this feeling. This also means that if we take experience as the primary stuff, differentiation of it as consciousness and its content is another experience, but he explained that this division cannot occur in reality in "Does Consciousness Exist?." Here, since he considers experience as the only reality, his conception of reality can be defined as experience-dependent, instead of mind-dependent. This implies that reality has no static character, and for this reason, to presume a reality of outer world and a reality of our mind that are independent from each other is baseless. In this regard, both correspondence theory of truth and coherence theory of truth have wrong assumptions at the beginning.²¹⁵

After his rejection of classical theories, it shall be good to explain the existence of objective reference, since it is argued that radical empiricism has some difficulties

²¹³ James, *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 19

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 6.

²¹⁵ Suckiel also argues that, James is against both classical theories of truth.

in establishing a common objective reference.²¹⁶ Montague and Lovejoy have two competing arguments concerning this problem. While Montague argues that pragmatism can offer us the existence of an object, Lovejoy is against this idea. Arthur Lovejoy is one of the thinkers arguing that James cannot be a realist; rather “he is in the line of the great nominalistic tradition of English thought, a successor of William of Ockham, of Hobbes, of Locke, Hume and Berkeley.”²¹⁷ He explains James’s standpoint in relation to his pragmatism.

What is pragmatically important is that this moment’s thought should forecast, or advantageously lead into, some future moment’s experience. In short, pragmatism substitutes inter-temporal flow for trans-subjective reference in its interpretation of the criteria alike of ‘serviceableness’ and of ‘objective validity’.²¹⁸

The inter-temporal flow cannot be a trans-subjective reference by means of its serviceableness. Since James explains the trans-subjectivity of objects with the functions of objects, this argument cannot be a precursor of the existence of object independent of our mind. In other words, in such an approach, an object cannot exist unless it is known by anyone. Accordingly, for Lovejoy, James can be an idealist or “anti-dualistic x”, but he cannot be a realist. The transition from temporal flow to trans-subjective reference by means of serviceableness is not enough for objectivity for Lovejoy, nevertheless there is no trans-subjective reference in James. He does not introduce such a reference, since he does not distinguish the objective reference from the inner flow of experience. It is related with his conception of existence and experience-dependent reality.

Montague argues that we can interpret James as a realist: First of all, he explains the meaning of realism and its different implications. His explanations are dependent on different conceptions of reality of things. “It is possible to hold the realistic view with respect to certain kinds of objects, and the subjectivist with

²¹⁶ Beside Miller and Bode, Suckiel points to this difficulty.

²¹⁷ Arthur Lovejoy, “Pragmatism and Realism”, p. 577.

²¹⁸ Ibid, p. 579.

respect to other kinds of objects.”²¹⁹ There are abstract and material entities and our approach to these realities can be different. “A person is a realist in respect to any class of objects just in so far as he believes that class of objects to be capable of existing apart from the cognitive relation.”²²⁰ In this sense some objects can exist without cognition and some cannot. This approach of realism may be compatible with James’s thinking, but for James the meaning of existence cannot be different with regard to different objects. Since existence can be explained in the realm of experience, he does not present the act of cognition as a precursor of existence. Experiencability is the only criteria of existence,²²¹ and there is no substantial and quantitative difference in our experiences. Cognitive relation must be a prerequisite for the existence of something, but it cannot be the cause of it, since we cannot differentiate cognitive relation from the flow of experience. It is another experience as I stated before. Besides, Montague’s interpretation is connected with different accounts of pragmatism also. He thinks that pragmatism can be divided into four accounts;

biological pragmatism, or the instrumentalist theory of knowledge, psychological pragmatism, or the motor theory of truth, ontological pragmatism or the humanistic theory of reality, and the logical pragmatism or the theory that “the truth of a proposition depends upon the value of its consequences.”²²²

For Montague, “James has defended all of the doctrines under consideration and his general philosophical outlook is perhaps an intermediary between the rather naturalistic tendencies of instrumentalism and the rather spiritualistic tendencies of humanism”²²³. James also presents his pragmatism as an intermediary, and he argues that it is only a method and it can reconcile different epistemologies. His

²¹⁹ Montague, “May a Realist be a Pragmatist?”, p. 461.

²²⁰ Ibid, p. 461.

²²¹ James, *Essays*, p. 160.

²²² Ibid, p. 463.

²²³ Ibid, p. 463.

radical empiricism and pragmatism promotes each other and he explains their relations in *The Meaning of Truth*. However, he also points out that one may reject radical empiricism while being a pragmatist.²²⁴ On the other hand, apart from the relation between pragmatism and radical empiricism, the problem of realism and the arguments of Montague and Lovejoy can be examined under the label of James's realism. Before clearing out this conception, I want to portray another implication of the critics of realism concerning James's philosophy raised by Bruce Brotherston.

The problem of realism is explained by Bruce W. Brotherston in "The Empirical Method in Philosophy"²²⁵ differently. He claims that James wants to keep two competing standpoints in his philosophy; the "subjective principle" and "realistic intuition". The subjective principle is connected with his argument concerning the intimacy and warmth. In *Principles*, and later in *Pragmatism* (in *The Essence of Humanism*), James claims that in knowing and in our relation to the external world we look for intimacy and warmth. The intimacy is the main criteria for the appropriation of thought in *Principles*. He interprets this fact as humanistic contribution to reality in the context of his understanding of humanism. Our knowledge of external world is closely connected with this intimacy, since when we find an intimate relation to the external world and we call this relation as knowledge.²²⁶ Moreover, our interests and excitements make the reality as stated in *Principles*, and this is another humanistic contribution to reality that James

²²⁴ James, *Pragmatism*, Preface, p. ix.

²²⁵ Bruce Brotherston, "The Empirical Method in Philosophy".

²²⁶ The phrase of intimacy can be explained by the notion of the immediacy of knowledge. Immediacy means the identification of knower and known or direct relation of them. This identification or the notion of immediacy needs some explanations in terms of the meaning of experience and the difference between the immediate and mediated experience. I shall elaborate this problem in the beginning of fourth chapter of my thesis. Now it is sufficient to determine that immediacy is accepted as the basis of knowledge here. This fact is clarified in James's *Principles* (p. 243, vol.1) and L. T. Hobhouse's *Theory of Knowledge* in chapter II. This argument is also questioned in T. M. Forsyth's article "The Conception of Experience in Relation to the Development of English Philosophy".

explains in *Pragmatism*. James emphasizes this notion, and he always wants to keep this intimate relationship with the objects known in our relation to the external world. However, James also argues that he is a realist in the sense that he also wants to keep a reality that we can know. However, there are some problems at this point, since there are some thinkers who do not accept his realistic standpoint similar to Lovejoy. According to these thinkers, a humanistic contribution is incompatible with the meaning of realism, since reality that we can know must be independent of us.²²⁷ Apart from these discussions about James's epistemological standpoints, for Brotherston the tension in James's thinking is originated from the irreconcilable intentions of him; the realistic intuition and the subjective principle. He argues that the subjective principle is not compatible with realistic intuition, since while James tries to keep the subjectivist perspective of his thinking, he is not successful in keeping his realism. According to the general conception of realism, the reality must be independent of our subjective contributions; however James thinks that reality cannot be out of our interests and demands. Moreover, Brotherston argues that experience is not a convenient basis for the general purpose of James's philosophy because of his emphasis of subjective principle. Accordingly, he thinks that these two different aims make his philosophy inconsistent.

Upon the whole, we can say that the main difficulty of James's realism is originated from his conception of reality. The two arguments that reality is mind-dependent and the cognition of this reality cannot be the cause of it are reconcilable for James. It can be claimed that James's reality is experience-dependent instead of mind-dependent. To go beyond experience means conceiving a trans-empirical reality and he claims that radical empiricism does not overcome

²²⁷ Professor Montague claims that a pragmatist can be a realist and James's pragmatism is compatible with realism "May a Realist be a Pragmatist". However, Professor Lovejoy is against this idea, "Pragmatism and Realism". According to him, James' thinking is not compatible with realism. See also the book of Harvey Wickham's *The Unrealists: James, Bergson, Santayana* and Richard Kirkham's *Theories of Truth*.

the disjunctive relations by calling them in any “extraneous trans-empirical support.”²²⁸ I will clear out his problem in relation to the meaning of radical empiricism and pragmatism in the following section. Consequently, it is true that James wants to give up neither subjectivism nor realism as Brotherston stated. Nevertheless, if we look from another point, I can explain this problem in the light of the problems as mentioned above. The immediacy of experience causes some problems for James’s realism. It does not seem appropriate for a common objective reference independent from the experiences of each knower. There is a dilemma in here, in the sense that although we can apprehend reality by our act of cognition, at the same time we argue that it must be independent from our cognition. While classical realist arguments criticize James at this point, James also presents us a comprehensive questioning considering the validity of them. For him, his critiques consider an abstract and absolute reality and an abstract truth. They conceive an agreement between two independent reality and they ignore the fact that truth is conditioned by the relations of experience. James’s emphasis of experience is connected with his conception of realism in this sense. As for the notion of consciousness, James tries to keep the subjective principle (as stated by Brotherston) while he is explaining the existence of consciousness and the relation between consciousness and the external world by means of the stream of thought. When he looks from the perspective of experience, he argues that consciousness does not exist, since he wants to correct the dualism of mind and body in pure experience. In this sense, I think that the tension that Brotherston talks about can be explained in different contexts also. This context is the existence of consciousness and James wants to hold both active and passive modes of consciousness. These two intentions of James may contradict at some points, but it is more reasonable than the classical strict realism offers. In crude realism, we argue that reality must be independent from our comprehension. By arguing this, we ignore the role of our cognition in the comprehension of this reality. However, at the same time to accept there is such a reality and to argue that we can know it

²²⁸ James, *The Meaning of Truth*, Preface, p. viii.

causes another problem. How can we know or talk about a reality that is completely independent from us? Even we cannot talk about the existence of it, but we want to know it by trying to keep its independence. This is the approach of strict realism, and it is not defensible for James. Our mind has two roles in this argument, and they are completely contradicting. James wants to keep these activity and passivity, but it can be explained in different contexts as in the stream of thought and the flow of pure experience. It cannot be said that he entirely solves the problem of existence of consciousness, but he has not got such a crude contradiction similar to the case of strict realism. Thus, James presents a more comprehensive and wider perception of reality and consciousness. Before starting another section, I want to explore another critic that is directly connected with to the conception of consciousness in James.

3.5 THE EXISTENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

I explained the conception of consciousness in *Principles*. Mainly, I talked about two accounts of consciousness that James considers. He refers to a stream of consciousness that flows freely concerning the realm of consciousness, and he also claims that consciousness is active and purposeful.²²⁹ I think that these two modes of existence of consciousness seem to be contradictory, since something that freely flows and something that has definite aims does not seem compatible with each other. James argues that there is nothing definite in the stream of thought, but he also claims that thought wants substantive conclusions in this stream. After all, he mainly argues that neither the aims of this flow nor the flights of it, or substantive conclusions of it, are stable. His approach aims to solve the whole picture in terms of dissolving the difference between mind and body. Nevertheless, I think that the activity of consciousness as a selective entity seems to be a problem for the self-evident free flow of thought. From the perspective of consciousness, he wants to explain the difference between consciousness and the external world in the stream

²²⁹ See Ellen Kappy Suckiel's *The Pragmatic Philosophy of William James*.

of thought, but he confronts some problems in explaining this stream and the realm of consciousness. This problem in James's thinking is pointed out by Jill Kress, and I shall briefly explain it.

According to Jill Kress, James's works embody tensions between scientific explanations for mental phenomena and the inescapability of metaphysical arguments.²³⁰

Jamesian psychology thus alternates between materialist and spiritualist assumptions of scientists and philosophers at the turn of the century, joining their compulsive investigations into the nature of consciousness.²³¹

Scientific explanations for mental phenomena and materialist assumptions of scientist bring forth a determinist view of consciousness.²³² Nevertheless, spiritualist view offers a more active role to consciousness by defining it as the seat of spirituality, since in a mechanistic materialism to find such a role for consciousness is impossible. Kress expresses this ambiguity from the point of language, however I shall try to summarize it from another perspective. James's scientific explanations of mental phenomena results from his attempt to clear out the activities of brain and our behaviors. He explains every act of us according to

²³⁰ Jill, M. Kress, "Contesting Metaphors and the Discourse of Consciousness in William James", p. 263.

²³¹ Ibid, p. 264.

²³² This problem is also raised by Owen Flanagan in "Consciousness as a Pragmatist Views it". He explains this problem as follows; "in the essays collected in *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, the dominant theme is that belief in freedom of the will –consciously orchestrated freedom of the will- is required to make life meaningful, whereas in the *Principles* we learnt that psychology must assume determinism. In *Human Immortality*, James suggests that "thought is a function of the brain (ERM, 81)" 28: He then goes on to argue that this assumption creates no obstacle to the doctrine that our conscious self "may still continue when the brain itself is dead" (ERM, 82). In effect, a science of finite human minds, which assumes that consciousness is functionally linked to the brain, is compatible with the thesis that after the functional link between brain and consciousness ceases to exist due to bodily death, consciousness may continue to exist for all eternity. Finally, in the paper "Does Consciousness Exist?" published fourteen years after *Principles* and eight years after the lecture on "Human Immortality", James writes "consciousness is the name of non-entity..." (MEN, 169).

the changes in the hemispheres of our brain. Kress argues that James wants to make metaphysical explanations also, since he has some arguments concerning reality in *Principles* and in his other books. In my opinion, James wants to reject the classical argument that every act of us is a result of our faculty of reasoning. He does not want to acknowledge a causal relationship between our reasoning and the external world or our bodily states. Furthermore, Kress thinks that James's problem results from his metaphors that he uses in defining consciousness. She takes up the problem of competing features of metaphors that James uses for defining consciousness and argues that the main difficulty of James results from the use of language. For Kress,

James helps create the modern self with its enhanced individuality, though his metaphors at once direct us inward to a centered, private self and propel us outward to find consciousness materializing in the fluxional cycle of the natural world.²³³

Kress thinks that James wants to materialize consciousness with “his desire to find words that are more ‘natural’ is as much an aesthetic motion as it is an attempt at correcting false theories.”²³⁴ To present a ‘natural’ account of consciousness and to construct an aesthetic attempt are the competing features of James's thinking. This aesthetic motion drives him using the ‘stream of consciousness’ instead, that is “consciousness is organic, natural, uncontrived.”²³⁵ James allocates a section for the stream of consciousness, but he uses this ‘dubious’ word in quotation marks. This is originated from the inadequacy of language for Kress. “Thus undermining the word, he emphasizes the unity of this indivisible flow as well as the sense that language feels inadequate for the task of producing consciousness.”²³⁶ She also mentions the selective nature of consciousness and the fluidity of the flow of thought.

²³³ Ibid, p.265.

²³⁴ Ibid, p.265.

²³⁵ Ibid, p.265.

²³⁶ Ibid, p. 265.

Each man, through 'selection' has made his experience. These words seem especially significant considering that James's own attention to consciousness allows him, in a sense, to 'make' it and also because of his sense that consciousness itself is a 'selective' agent. Moreover, this notion of experience-made indicates that the episode is frozen, not fluid; it becomes an image whose pieces we examine.²³⁷

The difficulty of the expressing the fluidity of the flow is originated from the phrase of 'experience-made'. This usage cannot reveal the nature of this flow. Therefore, the main difficulty of explaining consciousness as a stream of thought results from the insufficiency of language for Kress.

I think that this problem can be taken up in terms of the different modes of consciousness. Mainly, I claim that the different meanings of consciousness in James's thinking is related with his main intention that the subject and object can be dissolved in the stream of thought, but the two accounts of mind as active and passive cannot be reconcilable. He considers the same relation from the viewpoint of consciousness in *Principles*, he chooses the way of fusing the external world into the stream of thought, but the existence of consciousness seems to be problematic in this stream. It sometimes becomes a passive component of reality, and sometimes the creator of this reality. In order to endorse his thinking, James emphasizes the indistinctness of consciousness and its content both in *Principles* and in *Essays*. He clarifies that in the beginning, he does not take the dualism of subject and object for granted and he improves this approach, by emphasizing the inseparability of consciousness and its content not the subject and object. The identity of consciousness and its content is explained in the stream of thought in *Principles*. This postulation turns into the stream of pure experience in *Essays*. There is no owner of both streams and the content is the stream of thought in *Principles* and pure experience in *Essays*. It is important to determine that the content can be the stream of thought or experience, not consciousness or its object. The emphasis of this content is so significant that this content cannot be isolated

²³⁷ Ibid, p. 268.

from either the act of cognition or the object. It is identical with the act of cognition or experiencing. What James gives importance is this activity, not the static precursors or grounds of it. Even he denies any static entity in his philosophy. This activity or functioning is highlighted by the stream of thought in *Principles*. In radical empiricism, this activity means the act of experiencing and again the emphasis is on the identity of the act of experiencing and the object experienced not the subject and object. In this regard, the existence of consciousness in the second perspective of James must be considered under the name of different labels. In radical empiricism, both the existence of consciousness and the objective reference are under suspicion. Hence, James confronts the problems of solipsism and realism as I explained. Jill Kress also talks about this problem in radical empiricism in terms of consciousness.

For the question of existence is intimately tied to the questions of consciousness: being and making note of that being; tracing the origins of the self, of knowledge, of thought; not just feeling and thinking, but being aware that we are feeling and thinking. Questions about such processes involve a radical adjustment of our notions of the way the mind works. James's empiricism is "radical" in the same way because it goes back to the root, in an attempt to locate the origin of these concepts of experience, consciousness, knowing. James states that those who abandon the notion of consciousness and substitute "absolute experience" for it are "not quite radical enough" –that is, they do not go far enough. But James will take us to the extreme. The uncanny twist in the narrative of consciousness, however, comes when James gets to that extreme; indeed, he finds that the tools with which he created his "citadel" are also necessary to disarm it.²³⁸

The rejection of consciousness is the main indication that James's empiricism is radical. As Kress stated the difference between the act of thinking and the awareness of this thinking is important for the existence of consciousness, since consciousness provides us only this awareness as I have already stated. For Kress, consciousness is re-interpreted and re-named as "experience" in radical empiricism. Experience has no inner split as stated before, but the separation of experience into two parts "occurs because we confuse other sets of experience

²³⁸ Ibid, p. 278.

with the experience at hand.”²³⁹ This separation is an illusion and it originates from our particularization and definition of experience. As a result of these definitions, some experiences fall outside and what remains inside is particularized. At this point, Kress claims that the difficulty of James’s experience can be seen in his metaphors.

The certainty of definition is made emphatic by James’s separation of what falls “outside” and what remains “inside” the single experience considered. We read “defining” as the attempt to trace a line around the experience, to set its boundaries. Yet metaphors do not obey boundaries, they are extravagant figures that wander out of bounds.²⁴⁰

Accordingly, the outside and inside of the experience must go beyond its boundaries for Kress, since James wants to dissolve the existence of consciousness with these boundaries. There is something tacitly postulated within them because of the non-existence of consciousness. Kress explains this problem by the difficulties of metaphors that James uses in order for experience to define. Again I shall try to explicate this problem for the existence of consciousness in a different sense.

There is an inseparable experience. It flows and it is immanent to itself having no owner. Our particularization and definition of experience makes some experiences away from the inside of it. In other words, there is a difficulty about the relation between the stream of experience and our individual experience. We sometimes define and isolate some of our experiences for practical and functional purposes. After this isolation, it becomes hard to demonstrate the inseparability of our experiences from the flow itself and the fluidity of our experiences also. James is against the treatment of this isolation as if it occurs in reality. That is to say, he argues that it is necessary to divide and particularize some of our experiences from others, but “experience itself has no such inner duplicity”. Nevertheless, the

²³⁹ Ibid, p. 280.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 280.

problem of consciousness also emerged from this insideness or definition of experience. We must assume a subject or a consciousness in order for experience to be inside of us, since there is an act of defining apart from the awareness of our thinking. It is a different act from our awareness of thinking and this ownerless act causes a problem for the existence of consciousness. Moreover, for Kress he must also “provide in some way for the task of reporting consciousness perform.”²⁴¹

She explains this problem as follows;

For the question of existence is intimately tied to questions of consciousness: being, and making note of that being; tracing the origins of the self, of knowledge, of thought; not just feeling and thinking, but being aware that we are feeling and thinking. Questions about such processes involve a radical readjustment of our notions of the way the mind works.²⁴²

This radical readjustment needs some explanations for the existence of consciousness apart from its reporting activity. Kress thinks that at this point “revising and rewriting his theories becomes a tricky business for James”. How can something that does not exist particularize some of the experiences? In addition how does it report the existence of something? Thus, the activity of reporting needs an active being in this regard. James’s answer to this question is again within the postulation of pure experience similar to the stream of thought. Experience appropriates itself like the thought’s appropriation; however the act of appropriation needs an active consciousness rather than one that does not exist. This problem can be summarized for the existence of consciousness like this, but it has also some different implications. I talked about the difference between knowledge about and knowledge by acquaintance that James uses for avoiding the problem of solipsism. I stated that knowledge about is knowledge by concepts and it makes us far away from the immediacy of our experience. That is to say, when we know something by acquaintance it also makes our experience inside, but inside has an opposite meaning here. When some experience become inside and

²⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 277-278.

²⁴² Ibid, p. 280.

differentiate from other experiences, it means conceptualization of them at the same time. In this sense, the inside experiences is also outside of our experiences. In other words, this postulation needs an active consciousness also. Bode argues that James cannot remove consciousness completely, because there is an act of experiencing in the flow pure experience and it seems that James must postulate another ground other than pure experience.²⁴³ This ground may be either a trans-subjective objective reference or a trans-empirical subject. Both of them are contrary to the purposes of James's thinking. Bode explains this problem by means of the ambiguity of an objective reference for one field of consciousness and for other consciousness, that is solipsism. However, as I said before both the problems of solipsism and realism can be enlightened around the problem of consciousness.

3.6 PRAGMATISM

James defines his pragmatic method as “a new name for some old ways of thinking”. He argues that we already use this method both in philosophy and in ordinary life. The explanations concerning this method in his *Essays* are simple and clear, but he has a wider conception of pragmatism and there are many explanations of this method that are competing with each other. James elucidates pragmatic theory of truth in terms of many different perspectives. James argues that “truth happens to an idea”, and “its verity is in fact an event, a process; the process namely of its verifying itself, its veri-fication; its validity is the process of

²⁴³ Bode and Woodbridge is against the argument that all experiences have the same degree. That is to say, James considers pure and immediate experience as the ground of knowledge and at the same time he argues that cognition or conceptualized experience is another experience. Here there emerges two problems; one of them is the equality of two different experiences as immediate and mediated and the second problem is about the function of cognition. First problem can be summarized as how experience can be pure and immediate in these two sorts. The second is there is a function of cognition, and then Bode and Woodbridge argue that it is not the time of removing consciousness totally. These critics are involved in Bode's “Cognitive Experience and Its Object” and Woodbridge's “Consciousness and Object” and “The Nature of Consciousness”.

its valid-ation.”²⁴⁴ The process of verification is connected with experience, that is, the truthness of a theory is not absolute and can be verified in experience. In this sense, “theories are instruments” in our way of thinking, we cannot consider them as absolute.²⁴⁵ However, there are some thinkers who argue that such a conception of truth cannot be a theory of truth, since its validity is in a progress; it may be accepted as a theory of justification.²⁴⁶ Nevertheless, James’s philosophy can be rescued from this criticism by arguing that truths can be justified only in a conception of reality dependent on experience. Because of the unstable nature of reality, there seems no problem in considering truth as a theory of justification instead of assuming an absolute theory of truth. Besides, there are other critics linked with this definition of truth, because it contradicts with his another definition that “true ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify: false ideas those that we cannot.”²⁴⁷ Here, there is a tension between these two definitions, since “something that is verifiable is true” and “something that is verified is true” are different statements.²⁴⁸ In the former, the emphasis is on the changeability of truth, whereas in the second the stress is upon the importance of process. However, these theories are connected with James’s emphasis on experience. I claimed that we can replace the conception of reality that is mind-dependent with the concept of experience-dependent, since James also is against the restriction of reality with the concepts of mind. Conceptualization has only a functional role in knowing, we can directly know only by means of knowledge-by-

²⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 204.

²⁴⁵ White, Morton, “Pragmatism and Revolt against Formalism”, in his article Morton claims that James has not got an absolute truth theory.

²⁴⁶ See Bertrand Russell’s *Problems of Philosophy*. Richard L. Kirkham, *Theories of Truth: A Critical Introduction*. Kirkham questions the validity of James’s theory of truth. He mainly points out the difficulties and inconsistencies of James’s theory in terms of the ambiguity about metaphysical and justification projects. He details these problems and claims that the realism of James and his theory of truth have some problems.

²⁴⁷ James, *Pragmatism*, p. 201.

²⁴⁸ This critique is also raised by A. Ayer, *The Origins of Pragmatism*, p. 187.

acquaintance. Moreover, we should not treat our concepts as if they can be thought beyond experience. As I mentioned before, this would be carrying them to trans-empirical reality that radical empiricism wants to reject.

James's different explanations of truth can be summarized under the argument that "a proposition is to be accepted if and only if it works."²⁴⁹ As stated above the emphasis of James's definitions of truth is on the verification process and the main criterion of an idea's verifiability is its working process and usefulness. Thus, here James's theory of meaning is important for his conception of truth, in the sense that the meaning of a theory and its usefulness is important in determining its truthness.²⁵⁰

The pragmatic theory of meaning is connected with "cognitive meaning" of things. James wants to transform the general understanding of meaning into a cognitive understanding of meaning.²⁵¹ The conception of cognitive meaning is closely connected with experience, in the sense that in the realm of experience the meaning of something is coalesced with our comprehension of it. Here another question take places "what cognitive meaning is". It cannot be a static meaning, since its existence is dependent on cognition. James already claims that there cannot be a meaning independent from cognition, since such a meaning refers to a trans-experienced reality that radical empiricism rejects. Thus, as I stated before James introduces a different understanding of existence and he points out that "to be conscious" means only "to get reported". In this sense, being conscious of something cannot be the cause of its existence. However, there is another difficulty emerging here. He clarified that we cannot expect that the existence of things as dependent on to our being conscious of them. However, in the

²⁴⁹ A. Ayer, *The Origins of Pragmatism*, p. 189.

²⁵⁰ Ayer, *The Origins of Philosophy*, p. 189, Ellen Kappy Suckiel, *The Pragmatic Philosophy of William James*, pp. 87-115.

²⁵¹ Suckiel, *The Pragmatic Philosophy of William James*, p. 43.

immediacy of experience, we cannot know the existence of something that is beyond our cognition of it. The dependability of its existence on our cognition is connected with his intentions of “keeping warm” and “immediacy of experience”. For this reason, Suckiel’s argument that the meaning of something is related with its cognitive meaning is plausible. However, because of James’s realistic intuition we can see an ambiguity here: We cannot know it away from our cognition, but our being “conscious of it” does not mean that “it exists”. Accordingly, we must talk about a different realm of existence that we cannot touch upon its reality with our consciousness in the immediacy of pure experience.²⁵² It is also connected with the argument in *Principles* that “whatever excites and stimulates us is real.”²⁵³ However, beyond our excitements and stimulations, he considers a different realm of existence; since the existence of something can only be get reported by our consciousness. There already exists something and to cognize this existence is not connected with its reality. This argument conveys the reality beyond the realm of cognition and consciousness, and it is not compatible with the argument of *Principles* in terms of reality and the immediacy of experience. This problem can also be related with James’s strategy that although he argues that it is only a method of solving metaphysical disputes he makes “a much wider use of it.”²⁵⁴ It will be good to elaborate this argument for the following section.

3.7 PRAGMATISM AND RADICAL EMPIRICISM

Does pragmatism lose its neutrality when it is employed with radical empiricism? James proposes his pragmatism only as a method of solving metaphysical

²⁵² This point is related with James’s conception of cognition. Although he considers cognition is another experience, immediate experience is the foundation of his empiricism. We cannot touch upon the existence of reality since experience pure and immediate that needs no act of cognition. However, there is also the act of cognition and James calls it another experience. The immediacy of cognitive experience emerges a problem as raised by Bode and Woodbridge. Woodbridge, “The Nature of Consciousness” and Bode’s “Consciousness and its Object”.

²⁵³ James, *Principles*, vol. II, p. 295.

²⁵⁴ Ayer, *The Origins of Pragmatism*, p. 191

problems. However, the connection between radical empiricism and pragmatism produce a much wider conception of this method in relation to James's conception of reality and existence. He explains his method in *Some Problems of Philosophy* as follows;

The pragmatic rule is that the meaning of a concept may always be found, if not in some sensible particular which it directly designates, then in some particular difference in the course of human experience which its being true will make. Test every concept by the question "What sensible difference to anybody will its truth make?" and you are in the best possible position for understanding what it means and for discussing its importance. If, questioning whether a certain concept be true or false, you can think of absolutely nothing that would practically differ in the two cases, you may assume that the alternative is meaningless and your concept is no distinct idea. If two concepts lead you to infer the same particular consequence, then you may assume that they embody the same meaning under different names.²⁵⁵

According to this quotation, pragmatism includes only a rule in solving our problems. This rule is against the unnecessary absolute concepts in our knowledge. Indeed, pragmatism emphasizes the relation between the meanings of our concepts and our experience. The main drive of this approach is that James wants to avoid verbal metaphysical discussions in philosophy. He explains his method by a squirrel in "What Pragmatism Means". Considering a discussion about the movements of a squirrel around a tree in a vacation, James claims that all the possible solutions of a problem can be examined under the different implications of these solutions. Which alternative proposes much positive influences or sensible differences is true for him. He enlarges his examples in "Some Metaphysical Problems Pragmatically Considered" and he presents the application of his method to the concepts of substance, free will, the problem of design etc. The peculiar characteristic of pragmatic method is to deny all the stagnant and dogmatic entities or concepts in philosophy by means of evaluating and interpreting them according to their usage and cash-values. In order to remove some unnecessary, deep and verbal metaphysical problems he breaks some metaphysical concepts into pieces in terms of their feasibility. I shall detail his

²⁵⁵ James, *Some Problems of Philosophy*, p. 37.

applications in the fourth chapter in relation to classical empiricists. To state shortly, it can be said that the main purpose of James in applying his method is to show the factual roots of conceptual problems. By doing this, he wants to reveal the relation between philosophy and our life and demonstrate that conceptual meanings or disputes have no higher value than our daily problems or they are not independent from our temperaments and activities in our daily life. In order to establish the relation between them he chooses the ground of experience and it seems plausible for this aim. Experience has also an important role in the relation between pragmatism and radical empiricism. Hence, in the application of pragmatism to radical empiricism the concept of experience acquires a wider understanding. In this sense, James's aim of making empiricism radical goes hand in hand with his pragmatic method. He points out this fact in the preface of *The Meaning of Truth*. He argues that "radical empiricism consists first of a postulate, next a statement of fact, and finally a generalized conclusion". It shall be worthwhile to discuss the relation between James's empiricism and pragmatism via them. He explains them as follows;

The postulate is that the only things that shall be debatable among philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience. [Things of an unexperienceable nature may exist *ad libitum*, but they form no part of the material for philosophic debate.]²⁵⁶

Ralph Barton Perry examines this postulate in connection with Hodgson's principle that "realities are only what they are known as."²⁵⁷ At this point, Perry thinks that pragmatism and radical empiricism are allied, since the notion of "that they are known as" and experiencable can be reconcilable. In relation to experience, radical empiricism considers only the particular consequences of things that are not exalted from experience. Similar to this account, the practical

²⁵⁶ James, *The Meaning of Truth*, pp. XII-XIII.

²⁵⁷ Hodgson's principle can be read in his James's references as quoted from Perry as follows; *Pragmatism*, p. 50, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 443, and *The Meaning of Truth*, pp. 43, 118. James also gives references to Hodgson's *Space and Time* in his works.

and particular consequences and implications of things are the only realities that must be considered for pragmatism.

The statement of fact is that the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive, are just as much matters of direct particular experience, neither more so nor less so, than the things themselves.²⁵⁸

According to Perry, this point is the most significant notion that differs from ordinary empiricism. James's empiricism provides us a way to "escape vicious disjunctions" between meaning and truth, or idea and object. This way is acquired by the pragmatic method and the relation between them is founded on this principle. However, Perry also points out that while pragmatism and radical empiricism are allied, they can differ from each other as a doctrine. This difference is resulted from the emphasis of relations in radical empiricism. Pragmatism may not be linked with such an emphasis. That is to say, the main innovation of radical empiricism is originated from its understanding of relations and its acceptance that relations are also experientiable. Pragmatism does stress upon this fact and we can be pragmatist without "basing it on any fundamental theory of relations." Accordingly, at this point pragmatism does not lose its neutrality, but radical empiricism offers a different conception of experience and relations than ordinary empiricism. Finally, the generalized conclusion is as follows;

The generalized conclusion is that therefore the parts of experience hold together from next to next by relations that are themselves parts of experience. The directly apprehended universe needs, in short, no extraneous trans-empirical connective support, but possesses in its own right a concatenated or continuous structure.²⁵⁹

With this final point, radical empiricism "is not only a theory of knowledge, but a metaphysics as well", and it offers that reality "is an experience-continuum."²⁶⁰ It

²⁵⁸ James, *The Meaning of Truth*, pp. XII-XIII.

²⁵⁹ James, *The Meaning of Truth*, pp. XII-XIII.

can be compromised with pragmatism, but it goes beyond a methodic postulation. The emphasis on experience and the experiencability of relations are the main characteristics of James's conception of reality. He introduces experiencability as new criteria of existence and reality. Furthermore, he does not want to differentiate "the objects of experience and its parts."²⁶¹ This intention is related with the reality of relations.²⁶² By doing this, he explains every existence by means of the relations of experience. Relations of experience are real, since they are experiencable. These relations and parts of experience are coalesced with their functions in experience. Their functions are connected with the doctrine that "an idea is true if leads us, from one item of experience to another."²⁶³ "If they can fulfill this function they are true. Whether they correspond to objects which lie outside our experience is nothing to the purpose."²⁶⁴ These functional meanings can be determined by pragmatic rule, and for this reason James's radical empiricism is related with pragmatic method. In this sense, this method plays an important role in James's thinking and, it opens the way of a new metaphysics. However, James stresses upon that we can accept pragmatism only as a method different from radical empiricism. In this sense, pragmatism can be applied to different epistemologies. It is compatible with experience-dependent reality of radical empiricism by emphasizing relations of experience, and it promotes it in this sense; however it can be applied to another theory by different emphasis. James does not give explanations of other applications, but the meaning of pragmatism as a method is also clarified in his epistemology. Accordingly, at some points the method of pragmatism goes far away from being a method and becomes the foundation of

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 152.

²⁶¹ Ayer, *The Origins of Pragmatism*, p. 216.

²⁶² Sing-Nan Fen, "Has James Answered Hume?". Fen questions the relation between James's and Hume's philosophies. He emphasizes that the reality of relations is the main point that James develops his philosophy in relation to Hume's thinking.

²⁶³ Ayer, *The Origins of Pragmatism*, p. 215.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 216.

radical empiricism, but at the same time it can be thought only as a method applicable to some problems of philosophy. I think that its relation with radical empiricism is so strong and foundational that it loses its neutrality in this relation.

Upon the whole, I think that James can be accepted as a realist. His realism is dependent on his anti-abstractionism and his pragmatic method supports his attitude in that sense. If we assume a conventional concept of reality and “agreement”, this fact may cause some problems for his realism, but he clearly presents his objections such a conventional argument. His anti-abstractionist conception of reality and truth aims at reflecting the varieties and changes in the world of human experiences. As for solipsism, for James solipsism is “a metaphysical theory about the matter of reality, and flies far beyond pragmatism’s own modest analysis of the nature of the function knowing, which analysis may just as harmoniously be combined with less humanistic accounts of reality.”²⁶⁵ In that sense, his sense of humanistic contribution to reality and knowledge cannot be conceived as a concept that leads to solipsism, and also idealism. According to James, “one of pragmatism’s merits is that it is so purely epistemological. It must assume realities; but it prejudices nothing as to their constitution, and the most diverse metaphysics can use it as their foundation.”²⁶⁶ Thus, the main problems concerning criticisms of solipsism and realism should be considered by considering how and why James emphasizes experience and how he improves anti-abstractionism related to his conception of reality and truth.

²⁶⁵ James, *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 251.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 215.

CHAPTER 4

APPROACHING CLASSICAL EMPIRICISM FROM JAMES'S PRAGMATISM AND RADICAL EMPIRICISM

James's understanding of consciousness is linked with the function of cognition and James thinks that this function can be explained via the relations of pure experience. Besides, James's rejection of consciousness as an entity is also associated with his attitude towards mind-body dualism. He criticizes other empiricists by claiming that they assume this distinction. Furthermore, the main subject-matter of this chapter is the analysis of these critics and interpretations. This inquiry is important for our problem of consciousness and in this way I shall state the main differences of radical empiricism from classical empiricism.

One of the distinctions between empiricism and rationalism is originated from the conception of innate ideas. Thus, Locke's rejection of innate ideas is the beginning of British empiricism. The main argument of empiricism is that we have no source of knowledge other than sense experience. However, there are many similar points between empiricism and rationalism. For instance, Locke accepts that we can have knowledge by intuition, as the knowledge of God. He does not reject *a priori* knowledge, and accepts mathematical knowledge as *a priori*. Furthermore, while rationalists question the certainty of knowledge by sense experience, they do not reject it entirely. The argument that we have some ideas come from sense experience and we improve our knowledge over them can be accepted for both schools. Here the improvement of our knowledge is important, since in questioning of this improvement the accounts of rationalists and empiricists differ. Rationalists stress upon the significant role of reasoning in this process, whereas empiricists claim that all our knowing is dependent on experience. On the other

hand, when carefully examined the distinction between the knowledge from sense experience and the knowledge from reason alone is not so clear. In this sense, an inquiry into the nature of experience is important. This distinction and the elucidation of the notion of experience are the other problems of this chapter. As we shall see James's explanations about classical empiricists are linked to them.

4.1 EMPIRICISM OF JOHN LOCKE

I tried to recapitulate the main similarities and differences between radical empiricism and pragmatic method of James in the third chapter. We can see that while in some respects pragmatic method promotes the main principles of radical empiricism, at some points they are distinguished from each other. This double employment gives occasion to different interpretations of Locke's empiricism in his philosophy. On occasion, James appreciates Locke in construing some of his concepts and methods, and from time to time he criticizes him being a believer of soul. He finds in Locke's conception of consciousness a number of preceding arguments in developing this notion, but at the same time, he disapproves of his soul-substance belief.

I tried to explain the connection between radical empiricism and pragmatism in the third chapter. I said that pragmatism sometimes promotes radical empiricism of James and sometimes it operates only as a reconciliatory factor. The different points concerning the relation between pragmatism and radical empiricism can be seen in James's interpretation of Locke. When we see a problem about any concept, James makes use of his method to show that concepts do not have static meanings apart from the relations they enter. William Joseph Gavin construes this fact by the argument that James transforms vagueness into a virtue.²⁶⁷

James suggests that if we are in a vague position in deciding between two alternatives we should choose according to the differences that these alternatives

²⁶⁷ William Joseph Gavin, *William James and the Reinstatement of the Vague*.

may create. The differences mean the cash-value of the meaning of concepts. In this sense, Locke's method is employed within the functions of these ideas and he does not talk about the existence of substances beyond ideas. In this sense, Locke's method is employed in the same line with James's pragmatic method and he does not talk about the existence of substance beyond ideas. This is the point which James appreciates. This appreciation reflects the main applications of pragmatism to Locke's philosophy; however, radical empiricism must make a maneuver in order for classical empiricism to be radical. By the way, there are some points that radical empiricism is more than an application of a method and paves the way to a new metaphysics. Thus, because of these points, James does not completely approve Locke's thinking and criticizes his conception of soul-substance. To be radical, James chooses the way of denying the existence of consciousness as an entity. Since Locke did not make such an attempt, James also thinks that he believes in the existence of a soul and calls him as a "spiritualist" in *Principles*. Now I shall continue to clarify James's interpretation of Locke in terms of the conception of consciousness.

4.1.1 Locke as a Pragmatist

James finds Locke's standpoint of consciousness innovative at some points, but in order to strengthen classical empiricism and make it radical he leaves out some points as well. The first point that James wants to stress upon is Locke's questioning of the interrupted thinking of the soul. In order to explicate the discontinuity of thinking in Locke, it shall be good to remember James's stream of thought. Stream of thought is the main part of James's conception of consciousness in *Principles* as I explained in the third chapter. I stated that James does not to consider substantial existence of consciousness beyond this stream and he uses the concept of appropriation for this argument. Thoughts appropriate themselves in terms of their contextual relations in this flux and there is no place for spirituality and spiritual-substance in it. James thinks that the argument supporting the

substantial quality of our soul is the main opponent of his conception, since to attribute such a substantial quality to our soul is not compatible with James's purposes. He is against all substances and substantial qualities in his thinking. In *Principles*, before appreciating Locke's innovation, he introduces some questions in order to elaborate his standpoint;

Is consciousness really discontinuous, incessantly interrupted and recommencing? And does it only seem continuous outwardly as it inwardly seems?²⁶⁸

James continues to argue that we cannot give a rigorous answer to these questions, but Locke's answer seems reasonable at some points. For him, "if one has no doctrine about the soul or its essence, one is free to take the appearances for what they seem to be; and to admit that the mind, as well as the body, may go to sleep"²⁶⁹. In other words, Locke has not got a doctrine about the essence of the soul, and he attacks the Cartesian belief that soul is always thinking. Locke claims that "every drowsy nod shakes their (Cartesians) doctrine who teaches that their soul is always thinking."²⁷⁰ To be precise in Locke, thinking is not the substantial quality of soul and this point is reasonable for James. After these determinations, Locke tries to find an identity in our thinking. He argues that in order to accept a soul-substance we must find a proof that we are always thinking.²⁷¹ That is to say, we cannot defend such an idea while only we are thinking. In one moment of thinking, we cannot demonstrate that we are always thinking. This question is related to his empiricism, since in order to show that all our knowledge comes from experience; he introduces a historical, plain method in his *Essay*. He argues that in this historical, plain method he "can give any account of the ways whereby our understandings come to attain" the "notions of things we have, and can set down

²⁶⁸ James, *Principles*, Vol. 1, p. 200.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid*, Volume 1, p. 200.

²⁷⁰ Locke, *An Essay*, Book II, Chapter XXVII.

²⁷¹ *Ibid*, Book II. Locke questions this problem in chapter XXVII §§ 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

any measures of the certainty of our knowledge.”²⁷² Accordingly, he claims that he can demonstrate the roots of our knowledge in a historical method and such an explanation can help us in denying a soul-substance that is always thinking, since by this way we can see that all ideas come from sensation and reflection on our sensations, not from a static, non-empiric and superior conception of soul. However, I explained the vagueness in his method in terms of ideas and I talked about the difficulty of finding an identity in the continuity of our thinking and experiences. The validity of inferences from our senses is exactly questioned by David Hume. Locke, conversely, did not go into the details of such a question, but his query is chiefly about where we can find the identity of substance in this historical, plain method. This questioning is underlined by James, and he finds it as innovative;

Locke caused uproar when he said that the unity of consciousness made the same person, whether supported by the same substance or no, and that God would not, in the great day, make a person answer for what he remembered nothing of.²⁷³

In *Pragmatism*, James lays an emphasis on the identity of person in Locke’s thinking in terms of his pragmatic method. This is the second point that James interprets him as a pragmatist;

Locke, and later Hume, applied a similar pragmatic criticism to the notion of spiritual substance. I will only mention Locke’s treatment of our ‘personal identity’. He immediately reduces this notion to its pragmatic value in terms of experience. It means, he says, so much ‘consciousness’, namely the fact that at one moment of life we remember other moments, and feel them all as parts of one and the same personal history. Rationalism had explained this practical continuity in our life by the unity of soul-substance. But Locke says: suppose that God should take away the consciousness, should we be any the better for having still our soul principle? Suppose he annexed the same consciousness different souls, should we, as we realize ourselves, by any the worse by the fact? In Locke’s day the soul was chiefly a thing to be rewarded or punished.²⁷⁴

²⁷² *Ibid*, Book I, chapter I, § 2.

²⁷³ James, *Principles*, vol., 1, p. 349.

²⁷⁴ James, *Pragmatism*, pp. 68, 69.

As can be seen in the quotation, James uses his pragmatic method in terms of free will in interpreting Locke's consciousness. James's point is that if our soul does not have an identity, we can escape from punishment. James uses a quotation from Locke in order to express this argument;

Suppose one to think himself to be the same soul that once was Nestor or Thersites. Can he think their actions his own any more than the actions of any other man that ever existed? But let him once find himself conscious of any of the actions of Nestor, he then finds himself the same person with Nestor? In this personal identity is founded all the right and justice of reward and punishment. It may be reasonable to think, no one shall be made to answer for what he knows nothing of, but shall receive his doom, his consciousness accusing or excusing. Supposing a man punished now for what he had done in another life, whereof he could be made to have no consciousness at all, and what difference is there between that punishment and being created miserable?²⁷⁵

According to James, Locke keeps the question of the unity of our being pragmatic in this way. However, the problem of punishment is not sufficient for approving his pragmatic method. Owen Flanagan points out the double account of free will in James's conception of consciousness. In "Consciousness as a Pragmatist Views It", he talks about the problem that while it seems that we do not have a free-will in *Principles* (since James's explanations consider determinism), in *The Meaning of Truth* "the dominant theme is that the belief in the freedom of the will"²⁷⁶. This twofold consideration can be seen in his interpretation of Locke. Yet, Locke also does not completely deny the existence of consciousness. While James appreciates him as being a pragmatist in terms of the problem of the free-will, he also mentions the problem of consciousness or soul in Locke. Although it can be argued that James has also the twofold consideration, James criticizes Locke as a believer of soul. Now I shall briefly clear out this point in another section.

4.1.2 Locke as a Spiritualist

²⁷⁵ Locke, *An Essay*, Book II, chapter XXVII.

²⁷⁶ Owen Flanagan, "Consciousness as a Pragmatist Views It", p. 47.

James discovers a belief in a soul-substance in Locke's questioning of consciousness. This point is related to James's refusal of consciousness completely as an entity and it is important in the improvement of his philosophy over the arguments of classical empiricism. Locke's historical plain method, Berkeley's identification of perception and existence and Hume's atomistic conception of consciousness are the main contributions of classical empiricism. To achieve a completely empirical consciousness has always been a problem for empiricism. In Locke, to reduce the unity of consciousness into sensation and reflection is difficult. As for Berkeley, although the central theme is mind, to identify all existence with its perceptions causes some problems in explaining its existence. Hume also argues that we cannot have an impression of mind, so the existence of it is dubious. In order to present an entire solution to this question, James claims that consciousness as an entity must be removed from the realm of philosophical concepts totally. He criticizes all classical empiricists at this instant, now I shall explain his criticism of Locke. Firstly, he talks about this problem in *Pragmatism* after approving Locke for his questioning of consciousness;

Our personal identity, then, consists, for Locke, solely in pragmatically definable particulars. Whether, apart from these verifiable facts, it also inheres in a spiritual principle, is a merely curious speculation. Locke, compromiser that he was, passively tolerated the belief in a substantial soul behind our consciousness.²⁷⁷

In what sense, Locke's consciousness inheres in a spiritual substance is questioned in *Principles* in a more detailed way. Before explaining these facts, I want to emphasize that the vagueness in Locke's method in explaining the sensual sources of our knowledge linked with the usage of idea is important when we see Locke's belief in the soul-substance. He wants to explain all our knowledge and ideas within their sensual origins, but his twofold usage of consciousness causes the problem of the activity of mind. Mind has ideas and ideas are both senses and reflections in Locke. In addition, he also mentions ideas as if they are outside. As James claimed,

²⁷⁷ James, *Pragmatism*, p. 69.

Locke's conception of idea reflects the identity of thought and thing in his philosophy. However, this uncertainty causes the twofold existence of mind as I explained before. Our mind, the passive receiver of impressions from outside, is turned into an active compromiser and regulator of knowledge at the same time in Locke. Its reflective capacity has some potentiality in establishing both simple and complex ideas. Such a conception is connected with a soul-substance in the sense that it seems to have a substantial activity. James interprets this inspiration of soul-substance of Locke in *Principles* as follows;

The substantialist view of the soul was essentially the view of Plato and Aristotle. It received its completely formal elaboration in middle ages. It was believed in by Hobbes, Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, Wolf and Berkeley, and is now defended by the entire modern dualistic or spiritualistic or common-sense school.²⁷⁸

James criticizes all theories of knowledge assuming of duality between mind and body. According to him, Locke is one of the followers of this view. In order to elaborate the theory of soul or spiritualism it shall be good to check to James's definitions in *Principles*;

The theory of the Soul is the theory of popular philosophy and of scholasticism, which is only popular philosophy made systematic. It declares that the principle of individuality within us must be substantial, for psychic phenomena are activities, and there can be no activity without a concrete agent. This substantial agent cannot be the brain but must be something immaterial; for its activity, thought, is both material, and takes cognizance of immaterial things, and of material things in general and intelligible, as well as in particular and sensible ways, - all which powers are incompatible with the nature of matter, of which the brain is composed.²⁷⁹

The meaning of substance in James is a "self-existent being".²⁸⁰ To argue that Locke takes our mind or consciousness as if it is a self-evident being can be explained by Locke's ambiguities. Locke mentions the ideas of cause effect and power as if they are presupposed in our mind. In other words, we may infer from

²⁷⁸ James, *Principles*, vol., 1, p. 344.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid*, vol., 1, p. 343.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid*, vol., 1, p. 344.

his arguments in *An Essay*, that our mind has the potentialities of having the ideas of cause and effect before it receives sensations or impressions. If we accept that our minds have some potentialities, then we can argue that its existence is self-evident in having these potentialities. On the other hand, I stated that in his conception of power he also talks about as if the things in the external world have some potentialities that change their own simple ideas. For that reason, it can be said that apart from the soul-substance he mentions also a material substance and this duality is what James does not take for granted as I explained in the third chapter. Accordingly, because of the substantial potentialities and qualities of our mind, James claims that Locke is a follower of spiritualism which is the heritage of Plato and Aristotle. In clarifying this critic it shall be helpful to consider James's explanations concerning Locke in *Principles*. Sensation is one of the matters that James considers;

The aim of sciences is always to reduce complexity to simplicity; and in psychological science we have the celebrated "theory of ideas" which, admitting the great difference among each other of what may be called concrete conditions of mind, seeks to show how this is all the resultant effect of variations in the combination of certain simple elements of consciousness that always remain the same. The mental atoms or molecules are Locke called 'simple ideas'. Some of Locke's successors made out that the only simple ideas were the sensations strictly so called.²⁸¹

What sensations are in Locke is not sharp. As I stated before, he sometimes talks about impressions that come from external objects and he takes senses as the perceptions of our mind. In this regard, impression seems more atomic, since in the process of simple ideas the perception of our minds comes into scene. Therefore, whether we can accept simple ideas as senses is another question; however, James primarily attempts to show the crude trueness of Locke's approach. To be precise, he accepts that the first mental components of consciousness are sensations, and Locke tries to explain this fact by means of simple ideas. James explains this by arguing that "Locke's main doctrine remains eternally true, however hazy some of

²⁸¹ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 230.

his language may have been,”²⁸² since sensations “first make us acquainted with innumerable things, and then are replaced by thoughts which know the same things in altogether other ways.”²⁸³ Accordingly, because of the priority of sensations and simple ideas of Locke can be accepted similar. James allocates a quotation from Locke in order to explicate this;

..though there be a great number of considerations wherein things may be compared one with another, and so a multitude of relations; yet they all terminate in, and are concerned about, those simple ideas either of sensation or reflection, which I think to be the whole materials of all our knowledge...The simple ideas we receive from sensation and reflection are the boundaries of our thoughts; beyond which, the mind whatever efforts it would make, is not able to advance one jot; nor can it make any discoveries when it would pry into the nature and hidden causes of those ideas.²⁸⁴

The problem in Locke’s account is connected with the fact that simple ideas can be both of sensation and reflection, so we cannot easily distinguish senses and perceptions. If we accept that perception is a product of our reflection more than a sensation, Locke’s problem would be clear. How does reflection play a role in sensations? Or, in what sense does it play a role? These questions cannot be simply explained by his method. He accepts color and smell as the simple ideas that we acquire through one sense only, whereas space and extension are simple ideas that we acquire more than sense. It seems that color and smell are compatible terms that we can explain in the realm of sensations, yet it is difficult to explain space and extension by means of senses. Perception (thinking) and volition (willing) are simple ideas that we acquire by reflection. We already acquire all ideas by perception, and perception itself is a simple idea in Locke’s system. In this sense, Locke’s ideas are so wide in explaining every act of our mind. Moreover, there are also some simple ideas that we can gain both reflection and sensation as Locke explained in the quotation; power, existence and unity. As for complex ideas Locke

²⁸² James, *Principles*, vol. II, p. 6.

²⁸³ *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 6.

²⁸⁴ Locke, *An Essay*, Book II, chapter XXIII, § 29; chapter XXV, § 9.

gives the examples of modes, substances and relations. Therefore, it is difficult to distinguish our act of reflection in Locke's simple ideas, and for that reason it is difficult to distinguish between sensations of Locke. James says that his explanations can be accepted in terms of priority of sensation, since he also emphasizes that in psychology the word of sensation and perception run into each other.²⁸⁵ Furthermore, the ambiguity between these terms can be seen in James's account as well. According to Ayer, for James "perception always entails sensation, and at least in adult life sensation is never unaccompanied by perception."²⁸⁶ A pure sensation is an abstraction²⁸⁷ but;

"the nearer the object cognized comes to being a simple quality like hot, cold, red, noise, pain, apprehended irrelatively to other things, the more the state of mind approaches pure sensation. The fuller of relatives the object is, on the contrary; the more it is something classed, located, measured, compared, assigned to a function etc.; the more unreservedly do we call the state of mind a perception, and the relatively smaller is the part in it which sensation plays".²⁸⁸

Consequently, for Ayer the distinction between sensation and perception is not sharp in James. There are some similarities between James's explanations concerning sensation and perception and his distinction between knowledge-by-acquaintance and knowledge-about in *Essays*. Sensation gives way a "mere acquaintance with a fact" while perception gives us "knowledge about a fact; and this knowledge admits of numberless degrees of complication."²⁸⁹ The numberless degrees of complication are originated from our act of cognition and the innumerable contexts of experiences as James explained in "The Function of Cognition" in *The Meaning of the Truth*. However, we should not forget James's emphasis on immediacy of "pure experience". As Ayer states, "the shift from

²⁸⁵ James, *Principles*, vol. II, p. 1.

²⁸⁶ Ayer, *The Origins of Pragmatism*, p. 217.

²⁸⁷ James, *Principles*, vol. II, p. 3.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, vol., I, p. 488.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 2.

sensation to perception makes no difference” for the position of the fact itself.²⁹⁰ In both sensation and perception “we perceive the fact as an immediately present outward reality.”²⁹¹ This act of immediate perception causes many complications in James’s theory as I explained before, such as the problems solipsism and realism. On the other hand, I want to stress upon James’s main contribution to the theories of classical empiricism by his studies in the realm of psychology. Namely, his involvement in the theories of sensation and perception underlines the connection between brain and consciousness. Here it can be claimed that Locke’s and James’s emphasis and aims are different, since Locke excludes some questions about the relation between external world and us, his purpose is to analyze our strength and capacities of knowing in order to avoid skepticism and idleness;

When we know our own strength, we shall the better what to undertake with hopes of success: and when we have well surveyed the powers of our own minds, make some estimate what we may expect from them, we shall not be inclined either to sit still, and not set our thoughts on work at all, in despair of knowing anything; nor on the other side question everything, and disclaim all knowledge because some things are not to be understood.²⁹²

Accordingly, Locke wants to analyze the strength of our knowledge and to give a comprehensive and consistent scheme concerning our ways of knowledge. However, its inconsistency is criticized in terms of his excluded questions and his wide usage of some terms.

In the last quotation, Locke argues that there are some hidden causes of simple ideas. This argument is connected with his indirect strategy of considering external realities and the main relation between them and us. He considers these problems in the realm of ideas. However, James suggests that “the nature and hidden causes of ideas will never be unraveled till the nexus between the brain and consciousness

²⁹⁰ Ayer, *The Origins of Pragmatism*, p. 218.

²⁹¹ James, *Principles*, vol. II, p. 2.

²⁹² Locke, *An Essay*, Book II, § 6.

is cleared up.”²⁹³ In the third chapter I talked about James’s deterministic explanations of our behaviors and activities of our mind. Owen Flanagan also explains this fact in “Consciousness as a Pragmatist Views It”. James wants to analyze all our thinking and behavior depending on the changes of hemispheres of our brain. In this sense, the ambiguity of classical empiricism (this problem cannot be attributed only Locke, both Berkeley and Hume do not have a detailed explanation of sensations²⁹⁴) can be solved when we examine the relations between our brain and consciousness. However, his examination leads to the refusal of all spirituality within the activities of brain²⁹⁵, and this attitude leads to determinism in his thinking. This point reflects the main difference of him from classical empiricists. In addition, his discrimination of sensation and perception and his deterministic approach to the activities of our mind lead him to deny consciousness completely as an entity in *Essays*. In this sense, I cannot see a big difference in his two works. Accordingly, James’s main innovation is the examination of brain activities and consciousness. By this way, he wants to solve the problems concerning our way of thinking and to avoid spiritualism takes the dualism of mind and body for granted.

Locke does not reject the activity of our mind in employing our ideas. Locke talks about the discerning and distinguishing activities of mind;

Another faculty we may take notice of in our minds is that of discerning and distinguishing between the several ideas it has. It is enough to have a confused perception of different objects and their qualities, it would be capable of very little knowledge; though the bodies that affect us were as busy about us they are now, and the mind were continued employed in thinking. On this faculty of distinguishing one thing from another

²⁹³ James, *Principles*, Volume II, p. 6.

²⁹⁴ For the ambiguities of sensations, ideas and activities of our mind see the books of Jonathan Bennett; *Locke, Berkeley and Hume, The Central Themes* and *Learning from Six Philosophers*.

²⁹⁵ James, *Principles*, Volume I. This argument can be inferred from the second and third chapters of *Principles*.

depends the evidence and certainty of several even very general propositions, which have passed innate truths; because men, overlooking the true cause why those propositions find universal assent, impute it wholly to native uniform impressions: whereas it in truth depends upon this clear discerning faculty of the mind, whereby it perceives two ideas to be the same or different.²⁹⁶

Instead of the arguments that lead us to think that “our mind distinguishes and regulates the ideas”, James considers the nerve-currents in our hemispheres. However, to explain this clear discerning faculty of mind James presents the argument that “the differing objects should not come to us simultaneously but fall in immediate succession upon the same organ.”²⁹⁷ In addition, he proceeds on by saying that we can discriminate the things in immediate succession more than simultaneous sounds or smells. There is a ‘real sensation of difference’ and this is aroused by the “shock of transition from one perception to another which is unlike the first.”²⁹⁸ To be precise, we feel and perceive the difference in a succession and since the differences or the relations of comparison between our perceptions are directly and immediately perceived and experienced, it does need another discerning faculty of mind in order to explain the differences between our sensations and perceptions. The experientable relations are one of the main arguments of his radical empiricism. Through the experientable relations, James wants to reduce and even remove the foundationless capacities of mind such as discriminating, comparison and association. For him, “the truth is that Experience is trained by both association and dissociation”, but psychology and philosophy write them with “synthetic and analytic terms.”²⁹⁹ Without considering the direct sensations of associations and dissociations in experience, the simple impressions of Hume and the simple ideas of Locke would become both abstractions and “never

²⁹⁶ *Ibid*, Book II, chapter XI, § 1.

²⁹⁷ James, *Principles*, vol., I, p. 495.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 495.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 487.

realized in experience.”³⁰⁰ However, the terms “realized in experience” are not easy to express, so the experiential differences are. Instead of expressing them, James argues that he gives “merely a description of the facts as they occur”, and he avoids to abstract and systematize them;

My account, it will be noted, is merely a description of the facts as they occur: feelings each knowing something, but the later one knowing, if preceded by a certain earlier one, a more complicated object than it would have known had the earlier one not been there.³⁰¹

In this sense whether he offers a solution to this problem is itself problematic. He also says that he “offers no explanation of such a consequence of cognitions” and argues that “the explanation will be found some day to depend on cerebral conditions.”³⁰² Therefore, he accepts that his account is not so clear and complete. However, he also adds some positive contributions of Locke in this way of solution that is the explanation of cerebral conditions. He explains this fact in relation to the capacity of our mind concerning association as follows;

The psychological laws of association of object thought of through their previous contiguity in thought and experience would thus be an effect, within the mind, of the physical fact that nerve-currents propagate themselves easiest through those tracts of conduction which have been already most in use.³⁰³

For James, Descartes and Locke “hit upon this explanation, which modern science has not yet succeeded in improving.”³⁰⁴ He explicates this argument by stressing upon Locke’s emphasis on custom in explaining the associations of ideas;

Custom, settles habits of thinking in the understanding, as well as of determining in the will, and of motions in the body; all which seem to be but trains of motion in the animal spirits [according to James by this Locke meant identically what we understand by neural processes] which one set a going, continue in the same steps they have been used to, which

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 487.

³⁰¹ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 499.

³⁰² *Ibid*, vol., I, p. 499.

³⁰³ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 563.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 563.

by often treading are worn into a smooth path and the motion in it, it becomes easy and, as it were, natural.³⁰⁵

Whether the trains of motion in the animal spirit can mean the neural process is another question, but by examining our ways of thinking with custom, James thinks that the role of spirituality decreases. He mainly avoids a conception of mind that has some activities such as discriminating, comparison and association etc. He calls such a conception as spiritualism, and Locke can be classed in this group because of his belief in the activities of mind. However, as I explained before his arguments about custom can be a leading approach in the examination of neural process which James approves in explaining a consciousness without spirituality.

Above all, I argued that the activity of mind has some contradictions in Locke and this is the similar point of him with James. However, this argument cannot be the whole explanation of the relation between James and Locke. Although their problems seem similar, their philosophies have also differences. As I have already remarked Locke assumes a duality of the object and our mind unlike James and his aim is to analyze our knowledge. However, James does not take this duality for granted and he wants to emphasize the immediacy of experience in his thinking. Although *Principles* does not seem to have a complete non-dualism, in his major book he paves the way for his radical empiricism in which pure experience is the central theme. As for consciousness, James finds innovative features of Locke's approach in his questioning the substantial quality of consciousness, but James's main endeavor is to remove all foundation for spiritualism. Locke did not make such an attempt, but James's attempt in fulfilling this purpose is controversial also. The emphasis of immediacy and his original interpretation of Locke deserve to be examination in relation to his rejection of consciousness, and in this section, I tried to accomplish this aim. Now I shall move on with the empiricism of Berkeley and James's construal of his thinking in relation to consciousness and radical empiricism.

³⁰⁵ Locke, *An Essay*, Book II, chapter XXXIII, § 6.

4.2 EMPIRICISM OF GEORGE BERKELEY

I explained his philosophy in terms of the activity of our mind in relation to his twofold use of perception in the second chapter. The existence of our ideas is originated from our immediate perceptions, but God has a more active existence, that all universe are dependent on its all-encompassing perceptions. In this regard, I claimed that there can be an ambiguity of existence of our mind in Berkeley. James states that because of the denial of matter in connection with the principle of “to be is to be perceived”, Berkeley is a pragmatist. Moreover, Berkeley’s theory of vision is important for modern psychology for James, and he elaborates this theory in his *Principles*. However, James improves on this theory. In *Essays* he clarifies that his radical empiricism has one more argument over Berkeley’s empiricism. This one more step is the experienceability of depths and distances in our vision in *Principles*, and likewise the experienceability of relations in *Essays*. I shall elucidate these matters in this section and begin with James’s appreciation of Berkeley as a pragmatist.

4.2.1 Berkeley as a Pragmatist

James claims that;

Neither Locke nor Berkeley thought his truth out into perfect clearness, but it seems to me that the conception I am defending does little more than consistently carry out the pragmatic method which they were first to use.³⁰⁶

He makes this explanation after clarifying that Berkeley does not distinguish the realities of common sense and the ideas of philosophers. This identification is associated with Berkeley’s rejection of abstract notions. He calls attention to the argument that abstract notions and ideas are mainly used by philosophers. Simple

³⁰⁶ James, *Essays*, p. 11.

and illiterate generality of the men “never pretend to abstract notions.”³⁰⁷ Moreover, he acknowledges that we have a capacity of abstracting general terms, but he is against the reality of them beyond our perceptions. He explains this refusal in the first dialogue between Hylas and Philonus. In this dialogue, Philonus attempts to prove that away from our perceptions to admit the existence of a material substance has no ground. In order to fulfill this proof, he asks to Hylas what a material substance is, or whether it is “either a sensible quality, or made up of sensible qualities.”³⁰⁸ Hylas cannot demonstrate the existence of material or corporeal substance distinct from sensible qualities and by this way Berkeley wants to show that the distinction between primary and secondary qualities of substances (as Locke accepts) has no foundation; since we cannot demonstrate the existence of a possessor of these secondary qualities. Essentially, the purpose of Berkeley is to defend that all sensible qualities can exist within the activity of perception, and therefore, it is baseless to affirm a corporeal substance without these perceptions. In *Principles*, Berkeley criticizes a late deservedly esteemed philosopher (John Locke) concerning the existence of abstract notions. He makes some quotations from Locke in order to clear out his refusal;

The having of general ideas is that which puts a perfect distinction between man and brutes, and is an excellency which the faculties of brutes do by no means attain unto. For, it is evident we observe no foot-steps in them of making use of general signs for universal ideas; since they have no use of words or any other general signs. Therefore, I think, we may suppose that it is in this that the species of brutes are discriminated from men, and it is that proper difference wherein they are wholly separated, and which at last widens to so wide a distance. For, if they have any ideas at all, and are not bare machines, we cannot deny them to have some reason. It seems as evident to me that they do, some of them, in certain instances reason as that they have sense; but it is only in particular ideas, just as they receive them from their senses. They are the best of them tied up within those narrow bounds, and have not the faculty to enlarge them by any kind of abstraction.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge*, Introduction, § 10.

³⁰⁸ Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonus*.

³⁰⁹ Locke John, *An Essay*, Book II, chapter XI, §§ 10, 11.

In this quotation, Locke asserts that the capacity of abstraction and using of words are the main distinctions of human beings from brutes. Firstly, Berkeley questions the necessary connection between the abstraction and using words and he argues that it does not seem to be necessary. He continues by searching whether words can indicate an abstract or general notion. Furthermore, the main argument of Berkeley in improving a negative answer to this question is;

But it seems that a word becomes general by being made the sign, not of an abstract general idea, but of several particular ideas, any one of which it indifferently suggests to the mind.³¹⁰

Therefore, if we demonstrate that a word is of several particular ideas instead of an abstract idea, Locke's argument becomes inconsistent. After that in the twelfth proposition Berkeley wants to observe how ideas become general. He admits that there are general ideas, but he is against the argument that there are abstract general ideas. Moreover, he gives an example of abstract idea from Locke;

Abstract ideas are not so obvious or easy to children or the yet unexercised mind as particular ones. If they seem so to grown men it is only because by constant and familiar use they are made so. For, when we nicely reflect upon them, we shall find that general ideas are fictions and contrivances of the mind, that carry difficulty with them, and do not so easily offer themselves as we are apt to imagine. For example, does it not require some pains and skill to form the general idea of a triangle; for it must neither oblique nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon, but all and none of these at once? In effect, it is something imperfect that cannot exist, an idea wherein some parts of several different and inconsistent ideas are put together. It is true the mind in this imperfect state has need of such ideas, and makes all the haste to them it can, for the conveniency of communication and enlargement of knowledge, to both which it is naturally very much inclined. But yet one has reason to suspect such ideas are marks of our imperfection. At least, this is enough to show that the most abstract and general ideas are not those that the mind is first and most easily acquainted with, nor such as its earliest knowledge is conversant about.³¹¹

³¹⁰ Berkeley, *Principles*, Introduction, § 11.

³¹¹ Locke, *An Essay*, Book IV, chapter VII, § 9.

Berkeley thinks that nobody can conceive such a triangle that is neither equilateral, equicrural, nor scalenon, but all and none of these at once.³¹² In fourteenth proposition, Berkeley makes us remember that there is no need for abstract ideas in order to communicate and framing abstractions is a great, painful and multiplied labor. If they seem obvious and easy, it is because “by constant and familiar use they are made so.”³¹³ Furthermore, as for the enlargement of knowledge, Berkeley again claims that it does not seem that they are essential. He does not deny the necessary relation between knowledge and abstract notions, but he mainly defends that;

..those notions are formed by abstraction in the manner premised, not consisting in the absolute, positive nature or conception of anything, but in the relation it bears to the particulars signified or represented by it”.³¹⁴

What does it mean that “the formation of an abstract notion not consisting in the absolute but in the relation of it with particulars signified by it?” This point is that James appreciates most. This argument of Berkeley is compatible with James’s struggle with absoluteness in philosophy. To frame general concepts is related to James’s conception of knowledge-about. Knowledge-about is the conceptualization of experience that is different from knowledge-by-acquaintance, and as I stated before, James uses this distinction in order to avoid solipsism and the difficulty of expressing the immediacy of experience. In addition, this approach is linked with James’s criticism of vicious intellectualism in *A Pluralistic Universe*. However, James does not criticize Locke in this matter, since he appreciates his method of analyzing our knowledge by ideas in terms of the functional role of abstractions. On the other hand, Berkeley’s rejection of abstract notions goes with hand in hand his anti-absoluteness. He clarifies this point in *Principles*;

Until very recent years it was supposed by all philosophers that there was a typical human mind which all individual human minds were like, and

³¹² Berkeley, *Principles*, Introduction, § 13.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, § 14.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, § 15.

that propositions of universal validity could be laid down about such faculties as ‘the Imagination’. Lately, however, a mass of revelations have poured in, which make us see how false a view is this. There are imaginations, not ‘the Imagination’, and they must be studied in detail.³¹⁵

James states above arguments after his appreciation of Berkeley in *Principles*. If we accept the existence of abstract notions, we would have to believe the existence of a typical mind with a typical imagination, that James principally rejects. If we remember that James wants to analyze all our ideas and thinking within the relations of cerebral changes, he thinks that Berkeley’s and Hume’s approach to this problem is more plausible. He explains this fact as follows;

‘Stand for’, not know; ‘becomes general’, not becomes aware of something general; ‘particular ideas’, not particular things –everywhere the same timidity about begging the fact of knowing, and the pitifully impotent attempt to foist it in the mode of being of ‘ideas’. If the fact to be conceived be the indefinitely numerous actual and possible members of a class, then it is assumed that if we can only get enough ideas to huddle together for a moment in the mind, the being of each several one of them there will be an equivalent for the knowing, or meaning, of one member of the class in question; and their number will be so large as to confuse our tally and leave it doubtful whether all the possible members of the class have thus been satisfactorily told off or not. Of course is nonsense. An idea neither is what it knows, nor knows what it is; nor will swarms of copies of the same ‘idea’, recurring in stereotyped form, or ‘by the irresistible laws of association form into one idea’, ever be the same thing as a thought of ‘all the possible members’ of a class. We must mean that by an altogether special bit of consciousness *ad hoc*. But it is easy to translate Berkeley’s, Hume’s and Mill’s notion of a swarm of ideas into cerebral terms, and so to make them stand for something real; and, in this sense, I think the doctrine of these authors less hollow than the opposite one which makes the vehicle of universal conceptions to be an *actus purus* of soul.³¹⁶

Accordingly, if we accept ideas as the superior products of our superior reasoning, we would fall in a mistake that is connected with our “pitifully impotent attempt” that tries to explain the process of knowing within a higher degree of reality. This explanation leads us to think a Platonic idea that all the members of the class that

³¹⁵ James, *Principles*, vol. II, p. 49-50.

³¹⁶ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 477.

is abstracted and generalized under a universal get share of this abstract existence. Moreover, such an understanding directs us a conception of consciousness or mind that can know about this superior realm of existence. According to James, we can escape from these arguments by examining all our thoughts with the changes of hemispheres of our brain. Although Berkeley does not hold these arguments, James thinks that his system can be “translated into cerebral terms” and will be less “hollow than the opposite one.”

The rejection of the absolute existence of abstract notions leads Berkeley to deny the existence of an abstract material substance. In the dialogues he wants to prove that this substance cannot exist out of our perceptions. At this point, James argues that perceptions are the cash-value of material substance and throughout his thinking Berkeley reduces the exalted conception of corporeal substance into its empirical roots. Therefore, Berkeley is a pragmatist in a certain sense. It can be said that if pragmatism means the method of emphasizing the functional meanings and roles of concepts within their relations of experience, material substance means nothing other than the functions it serves in our experience and these are nothing by particular perceptions. Thus, he does not completely deny the existence of material substance; he proposes the existence of God as the underwriter of its existence. In order to clear out the existence of God, it shall be worthwhile to stress upon the explanations of him in *Dialogues*.

The refusal of corporeal substance without our perceptions serves to the purpose of anti-skepticism of Berkeley. In the last sentences of the first dialogue he identifies his principle with the rejection of a downright skepticism. Philonus says to Hylias;

You are therefore, by your principles, forced to deny the reality of sensible things; since you made it to consist in an absolute existence exterior to the mind. That is to say, you are a downright skeptic. So, I

have gained my point, which was to show your principles led to Skepticism.³¹⁷

According to Berkeley, the belief in the existence of a corporeal substance beyond our perceptions leads us skepticism. First of all, this argument is connected with his empiricism that is all our knowledge comes from experience and sensations. In order to be a complete empiricist, he insists that out of perceptions he denies all the existence. What if we believe in the existence of material substance out of our perceptions? We can explain our perceptions or we cannot deny that we perceive something, since such a denial would be meaningless given the reality of external world. How can we reject the perfect order of external world and the things in the external world?

Look! Are not the fields covered with a delightful verdure? Is there not something in the woods and groves, in the rivers and clear springs, that soothes, that delights, that transports the soul? At the prospect of the wide and deep ocean, or huge mountain whose top is lost in the clouds, or of an old gloomy forest, are not our minds filled with a pleasing horror? Even in rocks and deserts is there not agreeable wildness? How sincere a pleasure is it to behold the natural beauties of the earth! To preserve and renew our, relish for them, is not the veil of night alternatively drawn over her face, and does she not change her dress with the seasons? How aptly are the elements disposed! What variety and use! What delicacy, what beauty, what contrivance, in animal and vegetable bodies! How exquisitely are all things suited, as well to their particular ends, as to constitute opposite parts of the whole! And while they mutually aid and support, do they not also set off and illustrate each other? Raise now your thoughts from this ball of earth to all those glorious luminaries that adorn the high arch of heaven. The motion and the situation of the planets, are they not admirable for use and order? Were those globes once known to stray, in their repeated journeys through the pathless void? Do they not measure areas round the sun ever proportioned to the times? So fixed, so immutable are the laws by which the unseen Author of the nature actuates the Universe.³¹⁸

Accordingly, the perfect regularity in the nature and heavens cannot be ignored and refused. Depending on this perfectness, we cannot also disregard the unseen

³¹⁷ Berkeley, *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*, from the first dialogue.

³¹⁸ Berkeley, *Three Dialogues*, from the second dialogue.

author of the universe. If we acknowledge a material substance out of perceptions, it would be against empiricism, since such as in Locke's method, it is not easy to prove the existence of the outer world away from our perceptions and sensations. Locke gives an answer to this question an indirect way and assumes an external object apart from our ideas and our mind. However, in an empirical method these assumptions cannot be defended entirely. In order to present an entire and deep solution Berkeley chooses the way of denying all existence beyond perceptions. On the other hand, for the existence of external things, he presents the existence of God's perceptions. He claims that his proof of God is different and stronger than others. In order to clarify his difference he argues as follows;

Men commonly believe that all things are known or perceived by God; whereas I, on the other side, immediately and necessarily conclude the being of a God, because all sensible things must be perceived by Him.³¹⁹

By this way, he cannot absolutely refuse the existence of material things while he rejects the abstract notions of corporeal substance. He offers his solution as a more comprehensive and consistent empiricism and a strong arm to skepticism. James interprets his solution as an application of pragmatic method. In terms of God's perceptions material things exist, but in terms of our perceptions only ideas can exist. I explained this proposition for the activity of our mind in the second chapter. Our mind is active for the existence of ideas, but its activity is restricted if we compare it with God's perceptions. The main attempt of James in interpreting Berkeley is this twofold conception concerning the existence of mind or twofold conception of perception. At this point, Berkeley is a pragmatist for him.

4.2.2 James's Difference from Berkeley's Theory

James's critique of Berkeley's theory is connected with his radical empiricism in the sense that "the relations between things just as much a matter of particular

³¹⁹ Berkeley, *Three Dialogues*, from the second dialogue.

experience, neither more so nor less so, than the things themselves”.³²⁰ Therefore, “rightness and leftness, upness and downness” are pure sensations and directly experientiable for him, whereas Berkeley argues that distance or depth cannot be perceived and can become objects of our sensations. What if they become the objects of sensations? What changes will occur if we experience relations? In Berkeley’s system, in order to associate, relate, and regulate the facts in the nature and our ideas there must be an active wise contrivance. This wise contrivance is our mind in the case of ideas. Berkeley makes explicit that ideas exist differently from our mind, since their existence is dependent on it. On the other hand, our mind exists actively, though its activity is not current and effective in the real possibility of existence. Furthermore, our mind can regulate our ideas, and in order for such a regulation and system, there must be an active regulator for Berkeley. The owner of this activity changes for our ideas and the external world and the reality of external world has a higher possibility of existence linked with the perceptions of God. However, this case is different for James. There is no need for such an active regulator, since he stresses upon the experientiability of relations. This active controller is necessary for the existence of ideas and the external things in Berkeley. Nevertheless, in James’s thinking, the only criterion of existence is experientiability. Therefore, he has a different conception of existence from Berkeley. Whether he can prove that all relations can be experienced and whether the criterion of experientiability can solve all the problems concerning the existence of our mind and its objects are the main questions. However it must be expressed that the main distinction between Berkeley and him lies in this issue. For Berkeley the reality of external world and the perfectness of laws of nature are made certain by God’s perception. However, we infer the perfectness of laws of nature and the higher reality of outer world from our experiences. The validity of this inference is questioned by David Hume, Hume emphasizes that the certainty of them can also be questionable. Moreover, from the regularity of outer world to deduce the existence of an omnipresent spirit or a higher possibility of reality can

³²⁰ James, *Essays*, p. 42.

lead us other problems. Before passing to the empiricism of David Hume, I shall explicate some other points that distinguish James's empiricism from Berkeley's.

As I have already remarked that the experienceability of relations is the important matter that reflects James's difference. James asserts that;

..ordinary empiricism, in spite of the fact that conjunctive and disjunctive relations present themselves as being fully co-ordinate parts of experience, has always shown a tendency to do away with the connections of things, and to insist most on the disjunctions.³²¹

What is the meaning of insistence upon disjunctions? For James empiricism "lays the explanatory stress upon the part, the element and the individual", whereas "rationalism tends to emphasize universals and to make wholes."³²² Berkeley's anti-abstractionism colors his empiricism in the sense that he is against the independency of abstract notions. As I stated before, he stresses upon the relations of abstract notions with individuals and argues that the formation of universals is not dependent on their absoluteness, but on the relations they bear to the particulars signified. Thus, he is against the absolute existence of universals that are framed by our minds. To emphasize the relations between the individuals and universals in terms of the existence of universals is for the purpose of the immediacy of our perceptions. We perceive immediately our ideas, however if we accept the existence of abstract notions, the defense of this immediacy would be in danger. This point of immediacy is what James appreciates, however James does not agree with the active role of mind in regulating its ideas and sensations. This problem is resulted from Berkeley's "discontinuous thoughts,"³²³ since Berkeley believes in our perceptions, but he needs an active regulator in order to associate them. By this way, he insists upon their disjunctions and their discontinuity, and James argues that;

³²¹ James, *Essays*, p. 43.

³²² *Ibid*, p. 41.

³²³ *Ibid*, p. 76.

..the natural result of such a world-system has been the efforts of rationalism to correct its incoherencies by the addition of trans-experiential agents of unification, substances, intellectual categories or powers, or Selves.³²⁴

To compound and comprehend these discontinuities and disjunctions our mind is active in Berkeley's system and this point is what James criticizes. If Berkeley considers these perceptions and thoughts as continuous and appropriating each other, he could have explained the process of immediate experience without referring to a trans-experiential agent. Hence, this argument also reflects the experienceability of relations without any active mind or consciousness in James.

I began my explanation of Berkeley with his pragmatist account of material substance for James;

Berkeley's criticism of 'matter' was consequently absolutely pragmatistic. Matter is known as our sensations of color, figure, hardness and the like. They are the cash-value of the term. The difference matter makes to us by truly being is that we then get such sensations; by not being, is that we lack them. These sensations then are its sole meaning. Berkeley does not deny matter, then; he simply tells us what it consists of. It is a true name for just so much in the way of sensations.³²⁵

The identification of perceptions and existence is the main sign of Berkeley's pragmatism for James. However, I related it with twofold conception of perception in Berkeley's thinking. Berkeley does not make much explanation concerning consciousness; I tried to sum up his philosophy in terms of the mind's activity. The activity of mind is passive oppose to the God's perception, in fact its existence also is dependent on it. We perceive only our own ideas and perceptions and to attribute a material thing apart from them can lead us to skepticism and an inconsistent formation of an empiricist epistemology, which Berkeley is completely against. Indeed, he tackles with the abstraction in the process of

³²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 43.

³²⁵ James, *Pragmatism*, p. 68.

knowing in order to emphasize the immediacy of our perceptions. This way of philosophizing makes his empiricism more consistent from Locke at some points, since Locke would have to accept three existences in our knowing; that are ideas, our mind and its object. James's appreciation of him does not originate from this fact. Berkeley's discovery of the synchronism between perceptions and existence can be connected with James's emphasis on immediacy, but these points bring forth the problem of solipsism for both thinkers.

4.3 EMPIRICISM OF DAVID HUME

Upon the whole interpretations, it can be said that Hume's relation to radical empiricism and pragmatism should be examined from another point, since Hume provides a new viewpoint to empiricism. Explicitly, Hume gives a more detailed examination of our perceptions by dividing them into impressions and ideas. To be precise, the validity of inferences from our experiences and the method of empiricism constitute the main problems of his thinking. Such an inquiry drives him to skeptical doubts about the operations of the understanding. In this sense, he touches upon a more deep problem for James, since James also wants to examine the operations of our mind in thinking and knowing.

According to Michael Ayers, one of the first systematic rationalists of seventeenth century is Marin Mersenne. Mersenne's desire "to enhance the status of mathematics as a tool in natural philosophy"³²⁶ is the main sign of his rationalism. This desire is related to a theistic Platonism depending on the argument that "human reason is created in the image of divine reason, allowing us to achieve some understanding of the universal harmony through the "mixed mathematics" of sciences". Therefore, "the wish for improving the standing of mathematics" can be

³²⁶ Michael Ayers, "Was Berkeley an Empiricist or a Rationalist?", Ayers while questioning the epistemological standpoint of Berkeley gives a detailed explanation concerning the distinction between rationalism and empiricism. For the information about the philosophy of Marin Mersenne he gives reference to P. Dear's "Mersenne and the Learning of the Schools".

accepted one the common aims of both rationalism and Platonism. This is connected with the thesis of superiority of mind in gaining knowledge. Mind's role is superior in the process of knowing, since in acquiring the knowledge of mathematics and providing our knowledge a mathematical system, its contribution cannot be disregarded and superior to experience. In this manner, mathematics guides our knowledge of external world and reality. Because of the relation of mathematics to our capacity of reasoning, Hume's questioning into the operations of reasoning is essential. I tried to explain the arguments of Locke and Berkeley in terms of the capacity of our reasoning, but Hume's inquisition about this problem has a principal importance for the general empiricist tradition, since empiricism denies the superior role of reason in knowledge. The operations of our reasoning are investigated in a more detailed way by Hume. Hence, his importance in the empiricist tradition cannot be disregarded. Moreover, the capacity of reasoning is significant for the main problem of my thesis, since James denies the possessor of such a capacity and rejects consciousness as an entity in order to be a radical empiricist. It is one of the main arguments of radical empiricism and for that reason I tried to explicate James's interpretation of Locke and Berkeley on this problem. To be precise, in order to be radical, consciousness must be denied for James. The experienceability of relations is connected with this denial, since James thinks that if we accept the experienceability of relations there would be no need of an active consciousness to regulate these relations and to make them brought about. Furthermore, Locke's method does not shake such a capacity within his circular investigation of ideas depending on sensation and reflection. As for Berkeley, the active role of mind in the existences of ideas is one of the main principles of his thinking and in this sense it is difficult to differentiate him from Locke's attitude. Nevertheless, Hume has skeptical doubts about the operations of our reasoning, and they lead his philosophy a distinct empiricist standpoint from Locke and Berkeley. He, similar to other empiricists, presents the relations of ideas as an object of our reasoning and he argues that our propositions gained them are either demonstratively or intuitively true. However, they are not open to our experience.

In other words, the superiority of mathematics and in connection with it the superiority of our reasoning are dubious for the knowledge of the world in Hume. This fact can direct us important implications about the reality and the nature of knowledge. Now, it shall be good to explain them.

Firstly, apart from relations of ideas, matters of fact are the other objects of our knowledge and they are open to experience. After shaking the superiority of relations of ideas in the case of our knowledge about the world, Hume questions the propositions of matters of fact in another sense. He argues that “all reasoning concerning matter of fact seem to be founded on the relation of cause and effect”. Moreover, “all reasoning concerning fact is of the same nature” and “it is constantly supposed that there is a connexion between the present fact and that which is inferred from it.”³²⁷ This “constant suppositions” is one of the main notions that Hume examines. This examination leads him to the question of “how we can infer the necessary relations” from constant suppositions, or “where the origin of ideas concerning causal relations are”. Furthermore, Hume argues that “it is therefore experience only, that we can infer the existence of one object from that of another.”³²⁸ He wants to find the origin of the idea of causality and says that “the knowledge of this relation is not by reasoning *a priori*; but arises entirely from experience”.³²⁹ The statement that causality “is not attained by reasoning *a priori*” makes our propositions that we gain from matters of fact doubtful. Upon the whole doubtful and skeptic questionings about our reasoning, it can be said that Hume’s conception of knowledge become suspicious and this fact causes a similarity between knowledge and belief. He questions the ways of justification of our knowledge and he shivers our justification methods and this fact makes his “knowledge” similar to “belief”. According to Shouse, “the real hearth of Hume is

³²⁷ Hume, *Inquiry*, Section 4, Part I, § 22.

³²⁸ Hume, *Treatise*, Chapter 19, § 6.

³²⁹ Hume, *Inquiry*, § 25.

his belief in belief.”³³⁰ Hume makes two positions clear; “we cannot prove through reason” and “since we cannot know, cannot prove in the strict sense, we must believe.”³³¹ Shouse claims that the similarity between belief and knowledge is one of the points that make Hume a pragmatist. Consequently, I shall proceed on this section by examining the interpretations that consider Hume as a pragmatist apart from James’s explanations, since their relation can give rise to other problems in terms of knowledge and the reality of relations. Now it is time to turn Hume’s pragmatism.

4.3.1 Hume’s Pragmatism

As I explained in above section James argued that analogous to Locke Hume also “applied a pragmatic criticism to the notion of spiritual substance”.³³² For Locke, our personal identity consists “solely in pragmatically definable particulars”. However, he also criticized Locke, since Locke “passively tolerated the belief in a substantial soul behind our consciousness.”³³³ Additionally, in connection with this argument in *Principles* he called Locke a spiritualist as well. James proceeds on by saying that Hume, “the most empirical psychologists after Locke, has denied the soul, save as the name for verifiable cohesions in our inner life.”³³⁴ Yet, although Hume is the most empiricist psychologist, James also criticizes him being an associationist in *Principles*. His critique is founded on Hume’s questioning concerning the source of the idea of causality and the validity of our inferences

³³⁰ J. B. Shouse, “David Hume and William James: A Comparison”, p. 514. The importance of belief in Hume’s philosophy is clarified by Woodbridge and N. Kemp Smith as well. Woodbridge argues that in Hume the problem of belief is more important than the problem of knowledge in Hasting’s *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. Moreover, N. Kemp Smith argues that for Hume the determining influence in human is belief rather than knowledge in *Philosophy of David Hume*.

³³¹ *Ibid*, p. 514.

³³² James, *Pragmatism*, p. 35.

³³³ *Ibid*, p. 36.

³³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 36.

from experience. Before going into the detail of James's critique I want to examine James's differences on this issue.

After stating the distinction between rationalism and empiricism in *Essays* James presents the radicalness of his empiricism by proposing its difference from Hume's empiricism as follows;

Empiricism is known as the opposite of rationalism. Rationalism tends to emphasize universals and to make wholes prior to parts in the order of logic as well as in that of being. Empiricism, on the contrary, lays the explanatory stress upon the part, the element, the individual, and treats the whole as a collection and the universal as an abstraction. My description of things, accordingly, starts with the parts and makes of the whole being of the second order. It is essentially a mosaic philosophy, a philosophy of plural facts, like that of Hume and his descendants, who refer these facts neither to Substances in which they inhere nor to an Absolute Mind that creates them as its objects. But it differs from the Humian type of empiricism in one particular which makes me add the epithet radical.³³⁵

How does James's philosophy become a mosaic and what is the meaning of plural facts? He thinks that empiricism "is satisfied with the type of unity that is humanly familiar." He continues on by arguing that in empiricism;

Everything gets known by some knower along with something else; but the knowers may in the end be irreducibly many, and the greatest knower of them all may yet not know the whole of everything, or even know what he does know at one single stroke: - he may be liable to forget. Whichever type obtained, the world would still be a universe noetically. Its parts would be conjoined by knowledge, but in the one case the knowledge would be absolutely unified, in the other it would be strung along and overlapped.³³⁶

In this regard, "the greatest knower" of empiricism may not know the whole, since external reality includes a plurality and the empiricist's emphasis on the infinity and plurality of external things make the whole unknowable. The plurality of facts is an important part of James's thinking as in *A Pluralistic Universe*. In this sense, his philosophy is closer to Hume in terms of Hume's stress upon the plural facts. Like Humian empiricism James does not hold an Absolute Mind that "creates

³³⁵ James, *Essays*, pp. 42-43.

³³⁶ James, *Pragmatism*, p. 56.

something as its objects”. On the other hand, it is different from Hume’s theory in terms of “the experienceability of relations”. James explains this fact as follows;

To be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced. For such a philosophy, *the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as 'real' as anything else in the system.* Elements may indeed be redistributed, the original placing of things getting corrected, but a real place must be found for every kind of thing experienced, whether term or relation, in the final philosophic arrangement.³³⁷

Now how relations can be experiencable is the precise question. How can we experience relations? James does not give a direct answer to this question; it already seems a strategy in order to reject the existence of consciousness. He does not want to regard any consciousness that is responsible for the unification and interpretation of relations. Radical empiricism does reject everything which is not experiencable, so instead of denying the existence of relations it makes relations experiencable. He proceeds on by arguing that while ordinary empiricism insists upon disjunctive relations, radical empiricism does not. As I explained in the example of Berkeley, Berkeley’s nominalism and Hume’s statement that everything is “loose and separate” as if they had “no manner of connection”³³⁸ are the examples of “insisting upon” disjunctive relations. It means that Hume takes relations plural and changeable. Moreover he asks the question of how we can unite and make meaningful these pluralities and achieve generalizations in a valid way. Nevertheless, for James there is no need of such unification and the experienceability of everything can save us from this need. Why do we try to unite and give a certain way of unification to that plurality? If we do not hold such a purpose and if we accept the experienceability of relations, we can drop this question for James. There is no entity that makes meaningful the pluralities and there is nothing that can give a certain way of existence to the outer world by

³³⁷ James, *Essays*, p. 42.

³³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 43.

interpreting the variations of it. The only criterion of reality is experienceability and since they are experiencable, relations are also real like the things and facts. Hume is skeptical about causal relations and if causality is a relation, it can be “had” as well as known.³³⁹ Sing Nan-Fen explains the reality of relations in James as follows;

To James, relations can be a knowledge of acquaintance and as well as a knowledge about. To use Dewey’s terms, relation is not only to be immediately known, but it can be immediately had. We live in relations just as we know about relations. It is in this kind of state of being that the reality of relation is metaphysically warranted.³⁴⁰

The phrase of the state of being seems reasonable, since the emphasis of James on the reality of relations can be explained with the changeability of reality. If we admit our way of relating things and ideas as changeable, can we escape the problem of knowledge of them? James argues that the succession of one object after another or the succession of ideas and successive thoughts and emotions cannot give a certain explanation concerning the rules of their succession, since there is no such a rule. Appropriation comes into scene here and James explains the relations by means of appropriation of them. Relations appropriate each other, but this situation cannot make them impossible to know, because knowledge can also be explained in the contexts and relations of pure experience. However, as I said before this attitude to relations can be explained by the non-entity of consciousness. It cannot be a matter of knowledge for James, since he can explain them in the postulation of pure experience. On the other hand, there are some commentators³⁴¹ who argue that James’s and Hume’s account of knowledge can be explained by the

³³⁹ James, *Essays*, p. 163, “But in this actual world of ours, as it is given, a part at least of the activity comes with definite direction; it comes with desire and sense of goal; it comes complicated with resistances which it overcomes or succumbs to, and with the efforts which the feeling of resistance so often provokes; and it is in complex experiences like these that the notions of distinct agents, and of passivity as opposed to activity arise. Here also the notion of causal efficacy comes to birth.

³⁴⁰ Sing-Nan Fen, “Has James Answered Hume?”, p. 160.

³⁴¹ J. B. Shouse, “David Hume and William James: A Comparison”.

notion of “belief”. In other words, their knowledge may not be accepted as the usual sense of knowledge.

In other words, the plurality of experiences and the ambiguity and unboundness³⁴² of our thought render true and constant knowledge of anything difficult. However, this is the reason of the continuity of activity and even our life. The rejection of absolute reality and the criticism of intellectualism make James close to Hume’s thinking. To put in plain words, expectation of certain knowledge is against the variations of experience and experience-dependent knowledge that is not restricted with “cruel” concepts.³⁴³ James also asserts that logic or any method of knowing “cannot be an adequate measure of what can or cannot be.”³⁴⁴ These arguments also emphasize the unboundness of both our thinking and reality. Therefore, James’s conception of reality and cognition makes his concept of knowledge close to belief. Thus, he argues that “our faculties of belief were not primarily given us to make orthodoxies and heresies withal; they were given to us to live by.”³⁴⁵ This is one of the similar points that James share with Hume³⁴⁶, since Hume also argues that to search for a heresy or orthodoxy or certain reasonable truths lead ceasing all activity.³⁴⁷ Apart from these similarities, many commentators find the origins of pragmatism in Hume in different subject matters rather than his conception of soul. The denial of absolute truth by pragmatic method is one of the points that we can find in Hume as the implications of pragmatic account. This is also related

³⁴² Hume, *Inquiry*, Section II, § 13.

³⁴³ James, *A Pluralistic Universe*, pp. 55-56.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 225.

³⁴⁵ *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*, p. 25.

³⁴⁶ According to Philip Wiener, the most important difference between Hume and James lies in the fact that the latter works from the vantage point of an evolutionary theory not available to Hume in his day in *Evolution and the Founders of Pragmatism*. Apart from this distinction, their aims are compatible.

³⁴⁷ Hume, *Inquiry*, Section XII.

Hume's questioning about the ways of justification of knowledge and his replacement of belief for knowledge. Furthermore, Windelband, in his *History of Philosophy*, explains Hume's connection with pragmatism as follows;

The association of ideas...are accompanied by a conviction which has its roots in feeling, a natural belief, which, unperverted by any theoretical reflections, asserts itself victoriously in man's practical procedures, is completely adequate for the attainable ends of life, and for the knowledge relating to these. On this rests the experience of daily life. To question this never came into Hume's mind; he only wishes to prevent this form playing the role of an experimental science for which it is inadequate. With the earnestness of philosophical depth he unites an open vision for the needs of practical life.³⁴⁸

As I explained before, James uses his pragmatic method in a different way, and he interprets philosophical theories and arguments in order to defend his principles, since he points out the critical concepts of thinkers in order to explain his method. For that reason, though he sometimes appreciates thinkers at some point, he does keep up with his criticism as well. As it was said before, there is one point that makes James's empiricism different and this point can be examined with the expressions in *Principles* besides his assertions in *Essays*. This was about the experientable relations and the refusal of consciousness, and James expresses his differences from Hume by calling him as an associationist in *Principles*. Lastly, I shall make his criticism clear.

4.3.2 Hume as an Associationist

I explained James's denial of substantial existence concerning consciousness. Furthermore, he argues that Hume is an important thinker in demonstrating the contradictions of substantialists;

³⁴⁸ Windelband, *A History of Philosophy*, p. 477.

But Hume, after doing this good piece of introspective work, proceeds to pour out the child with the bath, and to fly as to as great an extreme as the substantialist philosophers.³⁴⁹

According to James, Hume showed to spiritualists the inconsistency of the absolute unity, and asserted the only reality in terms of association of ideas. James asserts one sentence in order to explain this fact;

As they (spiritualists) say the Self is nothing but Unity, unity abstract and absolute, so Hume says it is nothing but Diversity, diversity abstract and absolute; whereas in truth it is that mixture of unity and diversity which we ourselves have already found so easy to pick apart. We found among the objects of the stream certain feelings that hardly changed, that stood out warm and vivid in the past just as the present feeling does now; and we found the present feeling to be the centre of accretion to which, *de proche en proche*, these other feelings are, by the judging Thought; felt to cling. Hume says nothing of the judging Thought; and he denies this thread of resemblance, this core of sameness running through the ingredients of the Self, to exist even as a phenomenal thing. To him, there is no *tertium quid* between pure unity and pure separateness. A succession of ideas “connected by a close relation affords to an accurate view as perfect a notion of diversity as if there was no manner of relation” at all.³⁵⁰

Whether the last sentence that succession of ideas “connected by a close relation affords to an accurate view as perfect a notion of diversity as if there was no manner of relation” at all, can summarize Hume’s thinking is questionable. That is to say, James claims that Hume does not emphasize the existence of unity in the diversity of experiences and he stresses upon the relation as if “there was no manner” of relation at all. How this argument can be deduced from Hume’s inquiry? On the contrary, Hume tries to reveal such a manner of relation, but his search demonstrated that there was none. It seems that James exaggerates Hume’s inquiry, but such an inference cannot be denied completely as well. James claims that by enlightening the association of ideas, Hume give rise to the suspicion about

³⁴⁹ James, *Principles*, vol. I, p. 352.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 352.

the existence of our mind as a substance. Thus, this is the plausible point that James found in Hume's explanations about consciousness. However, he presents Hume's theory of consciousness in the line of associationists (one of the school he criticizes) and he explains this school as follows;

For this school the only possible materials of consciousness are images of a perfectly definite nature. Tendencies exist, but they are facts for the outside psychologist rather than for the subject of the observation. The tendency is thus a psychical zero; only its results are felt. Now, what I contend for, and accumulate examples to show, is that 'tendencies' are not only descriptions from without, but they are among the objects of the stream, which is thus aware of them from within, and must be described as in very large measure constituted of feelings of tendency, often so vague that we are unable to name them at all. It is, in short, the re-instatement of the vague to its proper place in our mental life which I am so anxious to press on the attention. Mr. Galton and Mr. Huxley have, made one step in advance in exploding the ridiculous theory of Hume and Berkeley that we can have no images but of perfectly definite things. Another is made in the overthrow of the equally ridiculous notion that, whilst simple objective qualities are revealed to our knowledge in subjective feelings, relations are not.³⁵¹

Although Hume calls attention to relations and has skeptical doubts about the operations of understanding on them, his fallacy is originated from the argument that "only simple objective qualities are revealed to our knowledge, not relations". This argument is held by ordinary empiricism and James is against it by his experiential relations. Relations are the direct objects of experience, and they need nothing in order to be revealed out by knowledge. Hence, this point reflects James's difference from Hume. I have already examined the critical points of this difference. Furthermore, I stated the difference of James from atomistic conception of self by his emphasis on the notion of stream. He claims that Hume is the hero of atomistic theory and explains his atomism as follows;

Hume was the hero of the atomistic theory. Not only were ideas copies of original impressions made on the sense-organs, but they were, according to him, completely adequate copies, and were all so separate from each other as to possess no manner of connection. Hume proves ideas in the

³⁵¹ *Ibid*, vol. I, 254-255.

imagination to be completely adequate copies, not by appeal to observation, but by *a priori* reasoning.³⁵² He elucidates his associationism by elaborating the distinct and separate ideas of Hume. Their distinctness is one of the reasons that support Hume's atomism. Furthermore, the fact that ideas are adequate copies of impressions sustains their separateness as well. Although the existence of idea is dependent on a prior impression, Hume's ideas can be replaced completely by impressions. If we remember James's emphasis upon the empirical roots of our knowledge, this fact makes Hume's empiricism and associationism insufficient in explaining consciousness empirically. There is one more point that he finds critical in Hume, which Hume's adequate ideas can be explained by *a priori* in his thinking. In order to defend this argument he gives references from Hume;

The mind cannot form any notion of quantity or quality without forming a precise notion of the degrees of each" for "it is confessed that no object can appear to the senses"; or in other words, that no impression can become present to the mind, without being determined in its degrees of both quantity and quality. The confusion in which impressions are sometimes involved proceeds only from their faintness and unsteadiness, not from any capacity in the mind to receive their impression, which in its real existence has no particular degree or proportion. That is a contradiction in terms; and even implies the flattest of all contradictions, viz. that "*it is impossible for the same thing both to be and not to be*". Now since all ideas derived from impressions, and are nothing but copies and representations of them, whatever is true of the one must be acknowledged concerning the other. Impressions and ideas differ only in their strength and vivacity. The foregoing conclusion is not founded on any particular degree of vivacity. It cannot therefore be affected by any variation in that particular. An idea is a weaker impression; and a strong impression must necessarily have a determinate quantity and quality, the case must be the same with its copy or representative.³⁵³

The argument that "impressions cannot become present to the mind without being determined in its degrees of both quantity and quality" reflects the main fallacy of Hume for James. He thinks that the priority of impressions is problematic in this

³⁵² *Ibid*, vol. I, p. 45.

³⁵³ Hume, *Treatise*, Part I, § VII, italics are mine.

sense, because they are in need of determined by our mind in order to exist. Their reality is dependent on this activity of mind and this fact confuses their difference from ideas and their priority. James explains this problem as follows;

The slightest introspective glance will show to anyone the falsity of this opinion. Hume surely had images of his own works without seeing distinctly every word and letter upon the pages which floated before his mind's eye.³⁵⁴

According to James, Hume thinks that we already have the ideas, without seeing the distinctness of them from impressions. They carry all the properties of ideas are also cognitively similar to them. So what is the meaning of priority of them? Hume says that whatever is true for one of them is true concerning the other, and this fact creates confusion for James. Their existence can be known *a priori* in Hume's system and Hume does not demonstrate their distinct reality from ideas.³⁵⁵ Furthermore, James finds the traces of another problem in Hume's impressions. He connects this problem with Hume's conception of reality. That is, in order to talk about the existence of anything, it must have an impression in Hume's system. However, the existence of them is dependent on their relation to our mind. For that reason, their priority is again becomes suspicious and James argues that Hume's explanations about the existence of impressions are problematic, and he could not demonstrate their existence as the roots of our ideas. As a result, similar to the problem of Locke, Hume cannot explain the roots of our ideas clearly;

Any relation to our mind at all, in the absence of a stronger relation, suffices to make an object real. The barest appeal to our attention is enough for that.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁴ James, *Principles*, vol. II, p. 46.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 296.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid*, vol. II, p. 299.

Ideas are the inner perceptions of our mind and they are the faint images of impressions. In the above quotation from *Inquiry*, Hume argues that the problem in impressions is originated from their faintness also. Moreover, he states that whatever is true of the impressions must be true for ideas as well. Furthermore, if an idea exists then its impression must exist. In this sense, any relation to our mind suffices to make an object real, but the differences between ideas and impressions become unclear. Because of the similar properties of them, Hume cannot explain the priority of ideas for James. Therefore, it can be said that James's main criticism is about the dualism of Hume. That is, James thinks that Hume takes the duality of mind and body for granted and, because of his unsuccessful attempt in demonstrating the empirical roots of our ideas, he stands in the same position with other empiricists. The only way of being radical and full empiricist is to deny the existence of consciousness for James. By this way, we can show the inconsistencies of the dualism between mind and body and we can explain all existence and knowledge within the contexts and relations of experience. Accordingly, James's interpretations concerning Hume reflect his peculiar philosophic attitude.

Above all, in James's interpretations of classical empiricists the pragmatic cash-value of concepts comes into scene when the soul or mind is not considered as a substantial existence. Nevertheless, he also thinks that his radical empiricism remove all the substantial qualities of our mind by rejecting its existence as an entity. In this manner, all ordinary empiricist theories prove themselves to be insufficient in eliminating the substantial qualities of our mind. The experiencability of relations and the non-dualism of James have important roles on this account. Experience is the only realm of existence, and if we can explain knowing in this realm, we can see that there is no ground for the substantial existence of consciousness. James wants to refuse a substantive owner of the process of knowing, and he argues that if we take notice that all these processes can change within the relations of experience, we would not have to refer to such

an entity. He criticizes all other empiricists in assuming a super-natural or co-conscious agency in this process. This is because although ordinary empiricism emphasizes that the only source of our knowledge is sense experience; in regulating and associating the data coming from sense experience they give an active role to our mind and this point is a misleading notion for James. Hume questioned this way of knowing, and because of his skeptical doubts about the operations of our understanding, James appreciates him. Apart from skepticism, he is against the existence of trans-empirical operations of understanding or reason. He claims that the activity of our mind or the changes and novelties in our thinking cannot be explained depending on the operations of our understanding. Indeed, such an explanation could not see the experientable roots of our reason, so it is disingenuous. If so, how we can explain the changes and novelties in our thinking? Or in a more general sense, how can we talk about activity in experience? James accepts that there is a creation in our experience and causality is at work in activity-situations.³⁵⁷ This creation is the cause of causal relations and I think that he must consider an active agent in this process apart from the relations of experience. However, he discusses this fact by the question of where the seat of causality and he argues that “causality inhabits no more sublime level in anything else.”³⁵⁸ Again the question arises how we can say something of an activity or causality or a creation without a trans-empirical level. He answers that “activity-situations come each with an original touch.”³⁵⁹ I think that this original touch or creativity and activity need an agency. James is not against only supernatural agency, but it seems that he also refuses all agencies. In the plurality of original activity situations the activity of agencies and the creative role of them dissolve and it results with an inconsistency. The creation cannot be explained in an open-ended stream of experience, since an agency can create a causal chain and

³⁵⁷ James, *Essays*, p. 184.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 186.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 185.

the beginning or ending of these chains in this unlimited and vague realm of experience. Creation is not compatible with such a process. This attitude rejects the agency in this process similar to stream of thought in *Principles*. In the stream of thought the owner of selectivity causes the same problem in the sense that how a stream can be selective is controversial. In order to answer these problems, he improves the experientiable relations and emphasizes the problematic nature of mind-body dualism.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

How does consciousness exist? James's main argument is that it cannot exist substantively given his understanding of pure experience in *Essays* or the stream of thought in *Principles*. It can exist only as a function. I took this argument as the most innovative contribution of James to classical empiricism, since I think that other contributions of James can be explored in this context. Moreover, I tried to explicate his empiricism in general depending on this argument. In this manner, this thesis aimed at clarifying the possible modes of consciousness in James, instead of explaining the nature of it. In *Principles*, James explains consciousness as a stream of thought. He does not want to recognize a transcendent level overarching and regulating this stream. His approach in *Essays* is similar to that of *Principles*, since he rejects any trans-empirical level. I think that these approaches direct his thinking to twofold modes of existence of consciousness. One of them is active, the other is passive. On the one hand, our consciousness is subject to a deterministic stream of thought; on the other hand, its selective interests and demands are the main contributions to reality. As for radical empiricism, the novelties and activities of pure experience has not got a static and trans-empirical agency. However, their originality and their capacity of starting a causal chain and activity need an agent. Chiefly, I tried to clarify how these two modes can occur together in James. Depending on his difference from classical empiricists, I tried to explore this problem. James's difference from classical empiricists is important in developing his radical empiricism. Pragmatism, on the other hand, is an important contribution to his philosophy in rejecting the substantial existence of consciousness. For that reason, in order to clarify his interpretations of empiricism, I considered his pragmatic method and the differences of it from his radical

empiricism. The problem that I point out considering the existence of consciousness has also an important role in this interpretations and I tried to explicate his principles and construal of classical empiricism with respect to this problem. Accordingly, the main problem of this thesis was about the possible modes of consciousness in James.

In the second chapter, I stated the general problems of classical empiricism. I tried to restrict these problems within the problem of the capacities of our mind, since I perceived that their notions can be associated with the problem concerning consciousness. That is to say, I related the question concerning the modes of existence of consciousness to the activity of our reasoning in the process of knowing. James rejects any trans-empirical activity of mind in knowing, and this activity can only be regarded as an attribute of a substantive entity. In this manner, the relations of pure experience are important in James's theory, since he perceives them as the only explanation concerning our knowledge. In other words, he does not refer anything beyond the realm of experience. The main criticisms of James about classical empiricists consist in their appeal to trans-empirical soul-substance. In order to avoid such an appeal, all the activities of knowing should be explained by depending solely on experience. To exhibit that all knowledge comes from experience, Locke determines two sources of knowledge; sensation and reflection. Nonetheless, their functions in our concepts have some difficulties in Lockian epistemology. Namely, Locke explains our complex ideas and concepts as if we already have them, though he explicitly rejects innate ideas. As a result, both empiricist and rationalist implications can be seen in his thinking. Idea is another vague concept of Locke, which he uses in a wider sense. Locke considers it for both thoughts and things. Because of these ambiguities in Locke, the activity of the mind is not clear in him. In other words, mind is both active and passive in the process of sensation, since it is captivated to receive them. However, because of the concepts we already have it is also active. This vagueness can be observed

also in the process of reflection. In this chapter, I talked about Locke with respect to these problems.

The second empiricist is George Berkeley, and the main notion that I considered in his thinking is perception. In Berkeley, all existence is explicated in the act of perceiving; however the owner of these perceptions is not constant. On the one hand, the existence of ideas is dependent on our perceptions; on the other hand, the existence of external world is founded on the perceptions of God. Thus, Berkeley does not refuse the existence of material substance and he has also a twofold approach to it. We cannot refer any existence independent from our perceptions, but the existence of material substance is chiefly dependent on the perceptions of God. Therefore, the activity of perceiving and Berkeley's material substance were the main topics of in the second chapter.

As for Hume, he repeats and improves upon the empiricism of Locke. Having accepted the general empiricist claim, he argues that all our knowledge comes from either ideas or impressions. His distinction between impressions and ideas gives a more thorough explanation of our perceptions and experience. He analyzes our way of inferences from experience. He differentiates the objects of reasoning into two; relations of ideas and matters of fact. He closed the propositions that gained by relations of ideas to experience, and argues that only our principles of matters of fact can say something about the world and our experiences. He states that all our reasoning about matters of fact is dependent upon the relations of cause and effect. Furthermore, he searches for the impressions that the idea of causation is originated. He stresses upon that impressions are prior to ideas. Impressions are more vivid and lively perceptions and come prior to ideas. Ideas are copies of them and are less vivid than impressions, since they are the products of our inward perceptions and depend on our memory. Therefore, he questions the validity of our inferences from experiences by means of his inquiry on causality. He maintains that the source of causal implications cannot be found in our reasoning. Actually,

this source is problematic in Hume, since he searches for the impression of the purpose of mind to pass from one thing to another and he emphasizes the difficulty of demonstrating this impression. He emphasizes that all general arguments derived from experiences depend on causal relations. Because of the difficulty concerning the impression that the idea of causality depends, this questioning leads his thinking to skepticism. Thus, he shakes the validity of our knowledge about the existence of our mind and the external world. As for consciousness, he defines it as the continuity of experiences similar to Locke. Besides he holds an atomistic conception of self in this regard, as he claims that we cannot display the impression of the idea of self. Because of his questioning on the historical, plain method of empiricists, he gives a new way to empiricism by raising new questions. Hence, the questions that Hume gives rise directed us to skeptical doubts about the operations of our understanding. Accordingly, his methodic questioning and his inquiry on causality were the main subject matters of his philosophy.

An analysis of James's works was the issue of the third chapter. In the first part, I surveyed his stream of thought in *Principles*. I questioned how selectivity can stand together with a stream of thought, since to explain activity in a stream is difficult, because activity can only be explained with an agent. This problem turns into the problem of knowing in pure experience. James argued that if we explain the function of knowing in pure experience we can get rid of consciousness as an entity. Knowing is the function thought performs, but this performance needs some explanations other than the relations of pure experience. How we can define the position of cognition in pure experience? James claims that knowing breaks the immediacy and he divides it into knowing-by-acquaintance and knowing-about. Explicitly, knowing-about breaks the immediacy of experience, but James claimed that it can also be explained within the relations of pure experience. This point makes the performance of thought uncertain, since the activity of breaking the immediacy is ownerless. There is a creation in here and James argues that this activity cannot be a product of a super-natural entity. In this sense, he rejects an

active agent in this process. I mean an active agent that can start a process of changes or a causal chain. This is not a super-natural agency as James states, but in order to explain the process we must consider an agency that is active for the creation of original touches in activity-situations. The position of this activity is unclear in James. The other sections of this chapter are attributed to pragmatism and its relation to radical empiricism. The neutrality of pragmatic method was questioned in order to clear out its application to classical empiricists.

This application was the topic of the fourth chapter. I investigated James's interpretations of classical empiricism in terms of his radical empiricism and pragmatism. He applies his pragmatic method when he sees an attitude in refusing substantial entities; such as Locke's and Hume's conception of soul and Berkeley's material substance. However, he mainly used it for exploring his thinking instead of a neutral appliance. Thus, his appliance was become insufficient at some issues and as a result he criticizes all of them being a believer of soul-substance. Here, radical empiricism has an important role in rejecting a soul-substance by the experiencability of relations and non-dualism of mind and body. After this summation, I shall try to explain why I perceive this problem as significant.

The problem of subject or agency is an important issue of modern philosophy. Whether we can explain all our doings and thoughts in a deterministic way or whether we can think our self as an active creator of causal chain is always open to discussion. By introducing the stream of thought, James wants to reveal out all our doings in relation to cerebral changes of brain-hemispheres. He wants to display that there cannot be any substance apart from this stream. Moreover, he points to the unknown causes of our actions and thoughts. These causes occur in the stream of thought and they direct our thinking, and they are not the products of a substance. Actually, he believed that the main reason in the setting of our belief in a soul-substance lays in the fact that we assume that thinking is the peculiar activity of such a substance and it is independent from extended things and our

experiences. As a result, he tries to show the relations of our thinking with extended objects in the stream of thought and in pure experience. Moreover, by means of a method of introspection, we can demonstrate the causal chain of our way of thinking and knowing. However, he does not assume an agency behind the stream of thought and activities and novelties in pure experience. According to James, pure experience and the stream of thought cannot inhabit a transcendent level or a supernatural agency. However, this argument is not sufficient to explain all our activities and we cannot ignore the power of starting these activities. It is clear that there cannot be a supernatural agency in the background. The variations of our experiences and the unexpected developments of history can prove this. It is difficult to restrict the human activities within the activities of a regular and a trans-empirical soul, and James also supports this idea by his pragmatic theory of truth. He always wants to reflect upon the factual roots of our concepts and our truths, and he tries to reduce all exalted principles into human experiences. On the other hand, these activities cannot be without an agent as well. One cannot say that there is no agent in James's thinking. Although there is a stream of thought, it has not got a regular process that includes no novelties and activities. It is selective, and this capacity is the main criteria of James's reality. In other words, the demands, selections and interests are the main contributions to reality. If we do not consider any agent behind this flux, the causal relations are open to retrogression infinitely or these relations are subject to unknown causes. Nevertheless, unknown causes cannot be the aim of James's thinking so is solipsism and anti-realism. Our beliefs are so important in his theory and they determine the meaning of truth in general. In that sense, he also emphasizes the individualism and subjectivism. Mainly, I tried to explain how these two aims can stand together in his philosophy. Besides, I tried to point out James's purposes in the background of this question. I examined his radical empiricism in connection with classical empiricists. I said that he appreciates the arguments of them that do not open a way to soul-substance and to a static reality. However, his appreciations also have some critical points in terms

of the activity of mind and I tried to explore them in the line of James's main purposes.

Therefore, on the one hand, James wants to reduce a soul-substance into its experiential roots and explains our thinking and doing in terms of physical forces, but on the other hand, he pursues the goal of promoting our individuality and subjectivity. Although there are some difficulties in accomplishing these two distinct roles, James's solution to our way of thinking and knowing is original and is open to variations of our experiences. Accordingly, James's subject is not a substance referring to an abstract reasoning, but also it is not a passive agent in receiving a finished reality. James's twofold conception of consciousness can appreciate the changes of our life in an unfinished world of pure experience. This is I believe a further point to be developed. For I think that James's worldview improves classical empiricism and rationalism by showing us the defects of both. However, an explanation of an active agency needs more articulation in radical empiricism of James, since I tried to show that James kept the issue in ambiguity and vagueness. Although his account is more plausible than rationalists who give an important and abstract role to a soul-substance and than empiricists who try to give a passive role beside their beliefs in it, James's general framework has some problematic points in defining it. Therefore, he kept ambiguous this problem in order to break the trans-empirical substance of rationalists and show the deficiencies of empiricist's atomistic self by emphasizing the continuity of thoughts and things in experience. To accept cognitive acts as experiences is one of the main improvements of his philosophy in overcoming the problems of classical empiricism and breaking a soul-substance. However, the tensions and ambiguities in his philosophy are also upshots of this improvement. In other words, in reducing all cognitive acts to relations of experience, James has some problems and these are connected with his two accounts of consciousness. I am not sure that we can find a certain solution to this problem in philosophy, because in an unfinished world of pure experience it is difficult to give a constant activity or passivity to our agency,

but I only tried to explore the differences, ambiguities and main properties of James's solution in relation to classical empiricism in this thesis.

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