NOTES

Introduction


2. Richard Hofstadter’s statement is typical: “Unlike Dewey . . . James was guilty of only the remotest interest in systematic or collective social reform. One expression of his fundamental individualism is the fact that . . . he had no sustained interest in social theory as such” (Social Darwinism in American Thought [Boston: Beacon, 1955], 134). See also Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 99. On Dewey’s political thought, see Robert B. Westbrook, John Dewey and American Democracy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), and Alan Ryan, John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995). Deborah J. Coon offers an interesting comparison of James and Dewey in “Courtship with Anarchy: The Socio-Political Foundations of William James’s Pragmatism” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1988). She argues that James’s ideas were less compatible with the Progressive movement than Dewey’s because James believed that “liberty and equality would best be attained without institutional interference. In fact, for James, the Progressives’ increasing standardization and rationalization of society was anathema to liberty” (5 n.8).

3. On James’s public career, the development of his political ideas, and the relationship of his philosophy to his politics, see two studies by intellectual historians: George Cotkin, William James, Public Philosopher (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), and Coon, “Courtship with Anarchy.”


13. I discuss James’s theory of democratic education in Chapter 5.

14. I take up James’s theory of heroic leadership in Chapter 1.


19. According to Coon, James maintained that “the intellectual, as the conscience and consciousness of society, could and should redirect the energies of society into constructive, ethically sound paths” (“Courtship with Anarchy,” 138).


22. *William James, Essays, Comments, and Reviews* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 170–76, 192–93. “That [James] had the energy to be concerned with the position of blacks, women, immigrants, minorities in other countries, the care of the insane, vivisection, medical legislation, educational policy, the temperance movement, the imperialism and militarism of the Spanish-American War, the annexation of the Philippines, and the Monroe Doctrine is a remarkable feature of his life and thought” (Myers, *William James*, 429). In “William James—Warts and All” (*American Quarterly* 29 [Summer 1977]: 207–21), George R. Garrison and Edward H. Macken deprecate James’s political activities, asserting that James was not “a significant reformer.” His “individualism kept him from acting in concert with others through effective organizations to bring to bear cumulative pressure” (211). Conceding that he wrote strong letters against American imperialism in the Philippines and condemned lynching, they argue that James did not contribute to Reconstruction or to the campaign for civil service reform, nor did he offer significant aid to blacks, women, or the Irish. They charge that he was ignorant of political theory, naïve about the causes of imperialism, and while not deeply prejudiced, indulged in racial stereotypes.


1. Models of Action

10. Talks to Teachers, 23–24.
16. The yearning for action and fear of passivity were not themes unique to James. Oliver Wendell Holmes and Theodore Roosevelt were but two other important members of the cult of action. James thought that his view and theirs were significantly different: Holmes’s belief in action lacked ethical content and neglected to see the heroism in everyday life; Roosevelt dangerously linked action with war and imperialism. See Oliver Wendell Holmes, “Speech at a Dinner Given by the Bar Association of Boston,” 7 March 1900, in The Occasional Speeches of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, ed. Mark De Wolfe Howe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 122-27, and Theodore Roosevelt, “The Strenuous Life,” in The Strenuous Life (New York: Century, 1902), 1-21. James’s critique of Holmes is in Perry, Thought and Character, 2:251. James criticized his former student in “An Answer to Roosevelt on the Venezuelan Crisis (1896)” and “Governor Roosevelt’s Oration (1899),” in Essays, Comments, and Reviews, 152-53, 162-66. I compare James with Roosevelt and Holmes again in Chapter 2.
17. James’s theory of mutual respect, discussed in Chapter 4, described the appropriate limits on action.
20. 9 May 1886, William and Henry, 1885-1896, vol. 2 of The Correspondence of William James, ed. Ignas K. Skrupskelis and Elizabeth M. Berkeley (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 40. “The National Labor Union (NLU) and the Knights of Labor . . . were broadly reformist, industrial unions that sought to unite all segments of the work force (agricultural and industrial, skilled and unskilled) and to supplant the wage system with worker-owned 'producer coop-
The Knights flourished briefly in the late 1870s and early 1880s and had 750,000 members at peak strength. In 1886 at a labor rally in Chicago's Haymarket Square, a bomb killed and injured police; the Knights were unjustly associated with the incident in the public mind. The union lost members and perished in the depression of the 1890s. Its major competitor and successor was the American Federation of Labor (Charles Sellers, Henry May, Neil R. McMillen, *A Synopsis of American History*, 6th ed. [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985], 257–58).


23. I am thinking of Aristotle's formulation that humans fulfill their telos in the political life of a community and am trying to avoid an association with the currently popular language of personal growth. The suggestion that public activity can be fulfilling does not mean that politics should be seen as part of the self-help movement.


30. *Talks to Teachers*, 164.

31. In rereading Marx recently, I was struck by similarities between Marx and James on the theme of thought and action. Like James, Marx demanded action, asserting that merely changing consciousness was ineffectual. Also, Marx said in “Theses on Feuerbach” that truth was not to be discovered in the world but ac-
accomplished through practice. The possibility of meaningful work, for example, is not a philosophical question but a call for society to create it. James expressed this same sentiment repeatedly.


33. Intellectual historian Bruce Kuklick disagrees, denigrating James, Josiah Royce, and Charles S. Peirce as being apolitical, although he claims that "both Royce and James popularized their moral and religious ideas." Kuklick writes: "George Santayana put it well, if acerbically, when he said of the Harvard philosophers that they had an acute sense of social responsibility 'because they were conscientiously teaching and guiding the community, as if they had been clergymen without a church . . . at once genuine philosophers and popular professors.' " Yet, Kuklick concludes: "Whatever their concern for ethics and religion, James and Royce gave little time to social and political philosophizing. Their output in these areas was slight, their analyses lacked intellectual substance, and their applications were conventional and often trivial" (Bruce Kuklick, *The Rise of American Philosophy: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1860–1930* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977], 306–7). Obviously, I disagree with Kuklick's conclusion.

34. "Social Value of the College-Bred," 111. By "inferior human influences" James may have meant priggishness and fear.

35. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 178–79. The similarity between James and Arendt on this point comes from Wolin's editorial comments.


37. *Talks to Teachers*, 163.

38. "Action, therefore, could be defined as an internal effort which had little to do with physical activity. It was the kind of heroism that keeps sensitive and thoughtful men from suicide, not the kind that wins battles" (George Fredrickson, *The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union* [New York: Harper and Row, 1965], 232).


40. He wrote, "The solid meaning of life is always the same eternal thing—the marriage, namely, of some unhabitual ideal, however special, with fidelity, courage, and endurance; with some man's or woman's pains" (*Talks to Teachers*, 166).

41. *Letters of William James*, ed. Henry James, 1:130–31 (emphasis in origi-
nal). In “The Moral Equivalent of War,” James mentions “dish-washing, clothes-washing, and window-washing...road-building and tunnel-making” (Essays in Religion and Morality, 172).


43. Will to Believe, 218, 137–38, 145–46, 227; see also James, The Principles of Psychology, 2:1235, and Browning, “William James’s Philosophy of the Person,” 164.


46. Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, 133. See Will to Believe, 236. Hofstadter added, “The pragmatists’ most vital contribution to the general background of social thought was to encourage a belief in the effectiveness of ideas and the possibility of novelties—a position necessary to any philosophically consistent theory of social reform” (125). Philosopher Henry D. Aiken said that according to James, “The world, and man as a central being in the world, is malleable, subject to mutations brought about by the determined decisions and actions of ordinary human beings” (“William James as Moral and Social Philosopher,” Philosop hic Exchange 3 [Summer 1980]: 58).

47. “Rationality, Activity, and Faith,” Princeton Review 2 (July 1882): 77; see also Will to Believe, 150, 235, and Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, 125, 132. “Great Men” and “The Dilemma of Determinism” are in Will to Believe, 145–83, 216–54.

48. Will to Believe, 246, 251.

49. Ibid., 218, 150. Note that James’s list of historical agents includes both leaders and ordinary citizens.

50. Pragmatism, 137–38 (emphasis in original).

51. Ibid., 138, 139.
52. William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 2:1235; *Will to Believe*, 226, 248, 260. The account of Darwinism is drawn from Browning, “William James's Philosophy of the Person,” 164–65. Cotkin distinguishes James from Nietzsche, saying that James believed most people could not be overmen and that God was needed for most people to act (*William James*, 102–3). But James sometimes seems to agree with Nietzsche that only the few count, and James's antifoundationalism comes close to atheism.


54. *Talks to Teachers*, 152.

55. Ibid., 159.


57. Perry insightfully claims in *Thought and Character*: “The heat which he missed in Emerson, William James found in Carlyle. The essays published in 1898 under the title of *The Will to Believe* [which includes “Great Men and Their Environment”] were composed in part as early as 1879, and they prove how deeply in his youth their author had drunk of Carlyle” (1:145). In *American Monroe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), S. Paige Baty's discussion of Emerson on the great man and masses dialectic is highly reminiscent of James (88–89).


59. “The Social Value of the College-Bred,” 108–10. Note that James shifts his own identification between being one of the elite (“we alumni”) and one of the many (“the rest of us”). For the type of view James is repudiating, see Adams, *Education of Henry Adams*, 248–49, 280–81. One can read Adams's suggestion that the Constitution is outmoded as a rejection of democracy on the grounds that a corrupt American public cannot choose competent and moral leaders.


62. This self-hatred may be largely confined to people raised in activist eras such as the Civil War, the Roosevelt era, or the sixties, but I have also detected it in some of my students.


64. *Will to Believe*, 242–43.

65. “Developing Community Leadership: Ella Baker,” in *Black Women in White America*, ed. Gerda Lerner (New York: Vintage, 1973), 348. Baker cautioned against excessive reliance on leadership saying, “I have always felt it was a handicap for oppressed peoples to depend so largely upon a leader, because unfor-
tunately in our culture, the charismatic leader usually becomes a leader because he has found a spot in the public limelight” (351).

66. Ibid., 352.


68. Will to Believe, 260–61.

69. Cornel West also called for leadership: “There is no one who is willing to be prophetic in a bold and defiant manner with a deep, all-inclusive moral vision and a sophisticated analysis of the distribution of wealth and power and resources in our society” (Cornel West and Bell Hooks, Breaking Bread [Boston: South End Press, 1991], 48).


71. Ibid., 303.

72. Political theorist W. Y. P. Elliott wrote that “only a romanticist can follow James as far as he leads in the direction of ... irrationalism and pluralistic individualism” (The Pragmatic Revolt in Politics [New York: Macmillan, 1928], 46). Philosopher John J. McDermott said that “few thinkers have had James’s confidence in the capacity of individuals to transform their world by tapping the energy of a voluntaristic ethic ... Nevertheless ... the individual is a social category, contexted over and over again by the swirling factors of institutional and communal history” (The Writings of William James, ed. John J. McDermott [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977], xi). See also ibid., xi–xiii.

73. Flathman, Willful Liberalism, 5; see also 69–70. In “William James as Moral and Social Philosopher,” Aiken said that in contrast to Royce and Peirce, James was an individualist (55).


75. Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, 134.


criticized individualism. See McWilliams, The Idea of Fraternity in America, 469–506.


80. Talks to Teachers, 4.


82. “The Dilemma of Determinism,” 174–75; Pragmatism, 139.

83. In Essays in Religion and Morality, 169.


85. “Thomas Davidson: Individualist,” in Essays, Comments, and Reviews, 86–97. Davidson (1840–1900) was a “philosopher and wandering scholar” who was born into a poor family in Scotland, studied classics in college, taught public school in St. Louis, and fell in with neo-Hegelians there who influenced him to reject positivism without embracing Hegel. He taught men and women from the Lower East Side in association with the People’s Institute and the Educational Alliance of New York and went on to organize “a Bread-Winners’ College” to bring the fruits of higher culture to wage earners (Dictionary of American Biography, vol. 5, ed. Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone [New York: Charles Scribners’ Sons, 1946]). On the relationship of Davidson and James, see Perry, Thought and Character, 1:731–61, and Coon, “Courtship with Anarchy,” 84–102.

86. Myers, William James, 430; Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, 135; McDermott, “Introduction,” in Writings of William James, xxxi–ii. James may be close to George Kateb’s notion of democratic individuality described in The Inner Ocean (Cornell University Press, 1992).


88. In Essays in Religion and Morality, 170. In “What Makes a Life Significant,” in Talks to Teachers on Psychology, James asserts, “the distribution of wealth has doubtless slowly got to change” (166). James’s socialism was influenced by Fourier, through his father Henry James, Sr., and H. G. Wells (Perry, Thought and Character, 1:60, 2:289; Myers, William James, 439). In a passage interesting for what it says about James’s way of thinking, James paraphrased Wells’s defense of socialism in New Worlds for Old: “The commonest vice of the human mind is its disposition to see everything as yes or no, as black or white, its incapacity for discrimination of intermediate shades. So the critics agree to some hard and fast definition of socialism, and extract absurdities from it as a conjurer gets rabbits from a hat. Socialism abolishes property, abolishes the family, and the rest. The
method, Mr. Wells continues, is always the same: It is to assume that whatever the socialist postulates as desirable is wanted without limit of qualification . . . it is to imagine that whatever proposal is made by him is to be carried out by uncontrolled monomaniacs, and so to make a picture of the socialist dream which can be presented to the simple-minded person in doubt—'This is socialism'—or pluralism, as the case may be. 'Surely!—SURELY! you don't want this'” (William James, A Pluralistic Universe [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977], 40). Cotkin rejects the notion that James was a socialist of any kind, labeling him an "existential anarchist" (William James, 172–75).

89. Sheldon Wolin comments: “Is his individualism so concerned with leaving a place for action as it is allowing variety to flourish even to the point of welcoming eccentricity? That's a different emphasis than other writers take with individualism. The starting point for James's individualism is his pluralism, not a kind of atomism. Pluralism suggests that while there are differences and variety, there are also webs of affiliation between the differences” (Wolin editorial comment).

90. Substantiation for these points can be found in Wolin, Presence of the Past, and Miller, Rise and Fall of Democracy in Early America.

2. James and Gender


5. For a range of feminist thinking today, see Linda J. Nicholson, ed., Feminism/Postmodernism (New York: Routledge, 1990), and Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller, eds., Conflicts in Feminism (New York: Routledge, 1990). In this

6. See, for example, the striking difference between Wendy Brown’s *Manhood and Politics* and her recent *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).


8. Di Stefano, *Configurations of Masculinity*, 60. She writes that greatly emphasizing “self-creative abilities” is “misogynist because it perpetuates a fear of and consequent need to dominate naturalized, and hence dangerous women” (129). She criticizes male autonomy on 164, 168, 173.

9. Ibid., 22.


11. Ironically, one of the clearest expressions of this distinction can be found in Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). See Pitkin, “Justice,” and Brown, *Manhood and Politics*, for feminist critiques of Arendt’s distinction. In Chapter 1, I showed that James did not sharply differentiate public from private life and is thus close to radical feminism on this point.


14. Several of Sheldon Wolin’s and Carey McWilliams’s editorial comments on the draft manuscript of this book seem worth citing directly. In commenting upon this passage, McWilliams asks: “Is there no connection created when boys identify with their fathers? And what happens to girls brought up by two gay men? How do they create their identities?” (McWilliams editorial comment).


17. Hartsock, “Prologue,” 149; Martin, “Martial Virtues,” 39; Pitkin in “Justice,” writes, “The appeal to heroism and glory unconnected to any standard of right transcending the individual is bound to produce at best empty posturing, at worst, violence and war” (341). See George Cotkin, William James, Public Philosopher (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 126, 146, 148, on James’s effort to break the tie between manly virtues and war. See also Christopher Lasch, The True and Only Heaven (New York: Norton, 1991), 283.

18. Hartsock, “Prologue,” 123, also 143, 146; Brown, Manhood and Politics, 79.


20. Brown attempts to answer this question in Manhood and Politics, 189–211. Pitkin in “Justice” describes a highly attractive form of democratic politics devoid of heroic display, but she does not specifically call this a feminist vision (343–48).


22. Di Stefano, Configurations of Masculinity, 172. For a recent rendering of the violence in cowboy life, see Cormac McCarthy, All the Pretty Horses (New York: Knopf, 1992).

23. Command and obedience are sometimes necessary but they need not be perpetual. After the crisis, there is room for more discussion. On feminist practice, see Barbara Epstein, Political Protest and Cultural Revolution (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Starhawk, Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority, and Mystery (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1990); and Popkin, “The Personal Is the Political.”


25. Michael C. Adams, The Great Adventure: Male Desire and the Coming of World War I (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), is a powerful and lucid description of how men understood gender roles in the late nineteenth century. I was surprised to see how much James’s vocabulary both reflected and deviated from the Victorian discourse of masculinity.


32. “One could say that women have taken James’s advice here, especially since World War II, and thus have incorporated James’s ideal of manliness” (Wolin editorial comments).

33. Early feminists expanded the political significance of motherhood in order to have a public role denied to them by men. There has been significant debate about whether this move was liberating or confining (Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980]).

34. *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 212. Similarly, James wrote in his *Principles of Psychology*: “The passionate devotion of a mother—ill herself, perhaps—to a sick or dying child is perhaps the most simply beautiful moral spectacle that human life affords. Contemning every danger, triumphing over every difficulty, outlasting all fatigue, woman’s love is here invincibly superior to anything that man can show” (2:1056). Although the sentimentalism and emphasis on maternity may be a bit nauseating, it is undeniable that James attributes to women the capacity for being heroic, ascetic.


36. This insight, along with several others in this chapter, comes from Elaine Thomas’s comments on an early draft.

37. Today, rhetoric against dependency is invoked as a justification for cutting welfare and other forms of aid to the poor, but it would be incorrect to attribute that motive to James in an era before the welfare state was created.

39. Essays, Comments, and Reviews (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 246–56; the quotations that follow can be found on pp. 255, 250, 251 (emphasis in original), and 252.

40. Ibid., 253–54. A more reasonable objection to Mill’s position, James implies, is that many marriages may be dissolved if they are based purely on affection rather than on egotism and self-sacrifice.

41. Myers, William James, 426.


48. James’s pejorative account of homosexuality can be found in the next paragraph in Principles of Psychology, 2:1054–55. But while defending the eternal nature of heterosexual romantic love, he also proclaims: “Friendship exists now as much as it ever did, but we fail to find in it food for the same literary treatment. Young fellows inspire romantic affection still in old fellows’ breasts, but the old fellows are a little ashamed of owning to this form of emotional susceptibility now. In ancient times it was the fashion, and they were proud of it” (review of Romantic Love and Personal Beauty by Henry T. Finck in Essays, Comments, and Reviews, 404).

49. James says that the declaration of war on Spain reflected the problem when
52. “Moral Equivalent of War.” 170. James wrote, “Militarism is the great preserver of our ideals of hardihood, and human life without hardihood would be contemptible (“Moral Equivalent of War,” 166).” See also 169 and Myers, William James, 441.
54. Jean Bethke Elshtain finds James’s formulation a necessary result of liberalism’s “binary opposition between war and peace” (Women and War [New York: Basic Books, 1987], 230-31). George Cotkin has suggested that James’s fondness for the rhetoric of manly heroism was due to the guilt he felt for sitting on the sidelines during the Civil War, the great event of his generation (William James, 21, 29, 100-101). Read psychologically, James’s call for the moral equivalent of war was an attempt to claim some of the soldier’s glory for civilians like himself. R. B. Perry adds that James’s “exhortation to action was addressed primarily to himself” because of his periodic depressions (Thought and Character, 2:674).
55. Principles of Psychology: 1:130. In “Gospel of Relaxation” in Talks to Teachers, James wrote: “By regulating the action, which is under the more direct control of the will, we can indirectly regulate the feeling, which is not. . . . There is . . . no better known or more generally useful precept in the moral training of youth or in one’s personal self-discipline, than that which bids us pay primary attention to what we do and express, and not to care too much for what we feel” (133). See


58. McWilliams points out that societies not only curb destructive feelings but frequently provoke prejudice and violence (editorial comment).

59. Will to Believe, 174–75. Of course, some effort to control fate is the essence of politics. Pitkin writes, “What distinguishes politics, as Arendt and Aristotle said, is action—the possibility of a shared, collective, active intervention in our fate, in what would otherwise be the by-product of private decisions” (“Justice,” 345; see also 343–45).

60. Letter to H. G. Wells, 11 September 1906, in Letters of William James, 2:260; Varieties of Religious Experience, 117. One hopes that James’s use of two feminine images in referring to success as an enemy does not indicate unconscious misogyny.

61. Varieties of Religious Experience, 72, 318; Talks to Teachers, 141.


63. See Plato, “The Apology.” James’s model presumes democratic institutions that will not allow coercion of the poor when they attempt to act.

64. Varieties of Religious Experience, 240–56; Will to Believe, 101–2; Essays in Religion and Morality, 169–73; Talks to Teachers, 172–75, 189.

65. It hurts to walk past a homeless person and to hear the long soliloquies pleading for money in the subway cars just as it is painful to read the stories about and see the pictures of refugees in Bosnia, corpses and survivors hacked by machetes in Haiti, the swollen stomachs of starving children in Somalia, and victims of terrorist bombings, incest, rape, and murder. Although nothing like the suffering of the victims, empathetic pain must also be borne. How could Hegel have found the will of God revealed in the morning newspaper?


68. Perry is perplexed by the fact that James criticized in Holmes what “James himself seemed so often to be preaching . . . action for the action’s sake” (ibid.).
Perry claimed that James demanded that people "serve . . . a moral ideal," but that is something different.

69. *Talks to Teachers*, 163 (emphasis in original).


71. Brown, *Manhood and Politics*, 206. She also writes, rather ominously: "Is this a clarion call for the death of politics, of heroism, of striving and glory, of men? No, we must keep them all, relieve them of their pathologies and incorporate into them what they have excluded, repudiated, suppressed, and denied" (187). On the difference between male and female heroism, see Di Stefano, *Configurations of Masculinity*, 99–100.

72. "Certainly there are countless examples of people arguing for the courage of one's convictions, of standing up for the things you believe. It does not always have to do with death. Maybe with Machiavelli it courts death, but that is a very special condottiere conception of courage" (Wolin editorial comments).


74. See Hartsock, "Prologue," 142. In "The Apology" and "Crito," Socrates offers a model of being willing to suffer and to die in acting upon one's convictions, which he explicitly claims is based on the heroism of Achilles.


76. I recognize that the constrictions of gender roles have begun to be loosened only recently, that historically, women have been discouraged from taking full part in sports and combat, and that women's athletics still do not receive the attention and funding equal to that of men. For example, a generation ago women were not allowed to guide rafting trips as often as they are now, and the following comment about the ski industry is applicable to many other sports: "Skiing is a very masculine sport," said Tedann Olsen, an advertising coordinator for a manufacturer of skiing equipment. "Men's racing has been better funded than women's, and the equipment and sales reps are men" (quoted in Barbara Lloyd, "Women Are Courted by Makers of Snow Boards," *New York Times* [11 January 1996], B17).

77. Adams, *The Great Adventure*, links James's suggestions for a moral equivalent of war with feminist efforts to find substitutes for military glory and says that neither caught the imagination of the American public (82). See "Moral Equivalent," 171–72, for a list of possible substitute actions.

78. "Shyness needs to be related to a substantive problem such as those who by temperament or by inclination do not want to take part. Radical democracy does not force people to take part; there's no need for that sort of Rousseauist coercion. Radical democracy is certainly about participation, but supposedly people are rational enough to realize that their interests and concerns are at stake in
what’s being decided, and they should take part in their own interests” (Wolin editorial comments).


3. Sources of Respect


2. At least theoretically, the unity produced by mutual respect could produce a strong state and a hegemonic identity.


8. This paragraph was suggested by Wolin.


10. I will show later that Connolly has apprehensions concerning the responsibility that political community devolves on the citizens.


16. Letter to Theodore Flournoy, 17 June 1898, in Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James, 2 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1935), 2:307. In a footnote at the bottom of that page, James desairs: “The worst of it is the complete destruction of the old belief in the vox populi. There is no doubt of collective attacks of genuine madness over peoples and stampeding them.”

17. James to Mrs. Henry Whitman, 5 October 1899, Letters of William James, ed. Henry James, 2 vols. (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1920), 2:105. McWilliams asks if James would have written these words a hundred years later—after the crimes of Hitler, Stalin, and the Khmer Rouge, which involved deadly regimes destroying large numbers of their own people (editorial comment). Wolin responds: “James’s argument is not so much an embarrassment because of Hitler, Stalin, and the Khmer Rouge but because it is a continuation of nine-
teenth-century concepts of national self-determination and a forerunner of Wilsonianism. In the next quotation James uses the word ‘harmlessly,’ indicating that the type of national self-determination that he is willing to defend is not aggressive and genocidal” (editorial comment).

18. “On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings,” in Talks to Teachers on Psychology (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 149. Note that here the solution is to admit that you cannot understand other cultures. Elsewhere James seems to think that you can understand cultures other than your own.

19. “Robert Gould Shaw: Oration by Professor William James,” in Essays in Religion and Morality (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 74. See also Letters of William James, 1:252. The problem is that James calls for respecting not only one’s opponents but also the established rules of the game. What if the rules institutionalize inequality and thus themselves conflict with the respect principle?

20. This insight comes from Wolin.


22. Talks to Teachers, 150; emphasis added.


24. Wolin editorial comments.


27. Ibid., 159.


29. “Would you go so far as to say one should go further than not punishing people for their ideas or not thinking about what they are say? Does one also have an obligation not to promote political, social, or economic policies that will, in effect, serve to eradicate that idea or make it difficult to hold for practical reasons?” (Wolin editorial comments).


33. McWilliams asks if these very terms are laden with disrespect (editorial comment). Certainly, they are based on social standards that others are judged not to have met. Can one remain respectful while saying, “That guy never did much with his career,” or must one, to be respectful, make no judgment, or go even further and find something to admire in the man?


35. In a wonderful passage too lengthy to quote here, John Stuart Mill described his father as a model politician, in this characteristic at least, because although he disliked his adversaries, as activists are wont to do, he was fair-minded enough to acknowledge the good points in his opponents’ characters and positions (*Autobiography*, ed. John Robson [New York: Penguin, 1990], 57).

36. “Mandela and De Klerk: Words on a Transition,” *New York Times*, 3 May 1994, A15. What led Mandela to give this gracious speech? Perhaps it was the strength of his character, an educational influence, de Klerk’s virtues, and a pragmatic assessment of the consequences of revenge.

37. Some political activists believe that academics are contemptibly weak when they try to understand and speak moderately about their opponents and that moving people politically requires fervid, unbalanced rhetoric. The second point may be true.

38. In *Men in Dark Times*, Arendt uses different terms to indicate a generosity beyond toleration. “This has very little to do with tolerance in the ordinary sense . . . but it has a great deal to do with the gift of friendship, and with openness to the world, and finally with genuine love of mankind” (26).

39. On toleration generally, see Ingrid E. Creppell, “The Genesis of Toleration as a Value” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1994). Admittedly, James’s examples of overcoming blindness are about acquiring a new point of view toward other cultures, not studying them.

40. This sentence and the previous one were suggested by Wolin.

41. *Talks to Teachers*, 165–66. Violence and the reconciliation of labor and management were central themes of political and religious theorists in the 1880s. Although James shared with “social Christians” a belief in social harmony and dialogue, along with a critique of capitalism’s excesses, he did not put organized religion at the center of his thinking about how to improve understanding between classes. See Andrew Feffer, *The Chicago Pragmatists and American Progressivism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 67–116. Nor did James share socialists’ faith that redistribution of the wealth would end all major conflict.
42. *Talks to Teachers*, 133–34.


44. I discuss the relationship of truth and action in Chapter 4.

45. *Talks to Teachers*, 132–33. Although I agree with James that reason is not the root of most opinions, I would place greater emphasis on personal and cultural influences, e.g., the groups into which one is born, the influential people one encounters.

46. For a discussion of parochialism and democracy in the context of early American politics, see Miller, *Rise and Fall of Democracy*, 100–103.

47. James also contemplated leaving the United States because he so hated the “sight of my fellow beings at hotels and dining-cars having their boiled eggs bro’t to them, broken by a negro, two in a cup, and eaten with butter. How irrational this dislike is, is proved both by the logic, and by the pleasure taken in the custom by the elite of mankind over here” (letter to Henry James, 3 May 1903, in *William and Henry*, 1897–1910, vol. 3 of *The Correspondence of William James*, ed. Ignas K. Skrupskelis and Elizabeth M. Berkeley [Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994], 233).

48. *Talks to Teachers*, 154–56; quotation is on 154.

49. In this way among others, James’s critical political position is different from that of Richard Rorty, who invokes pragmatism to justify, even celebrate, existing American values and arrangements.

50. One illustration of what James rejected is John Locke’s implied dictum that cultures which do not productively use the land deserve to lose it. “God gave the world . . . to the use of the industrious and rational” (*Locke, Second Treatise of Government*, chap. 5, par. 34).

51. *Talks to Teachers*, 141.

52. Ibid., 146–47.


55. *Talks to Teachers*, 133. Here the problem is too much distance, but else-
where James urges us to realize that from a large distance, our differences are insignificant.

56. “The spectator has a long history in philosophy of detachment, distance, and therefore of impartiality and objectivity. James is attacking a position that is virtually identical with the history of philosophy. Today, Foucault and others attack ‘the ocular position’” (Wolin editorial comments).

57. *Talks to Teachers*, 151 (emphasis in original). James overlooks the possibility of blindness to the faults in what one loves. Applied to politics, this oversight might take the form of so much devotion to a cause that one becomes unable to perceive in it danger, mistakes, or futility.

58. Like James, Adam Smith believed that true sympathy for others is difficult, but he claimed that it is easier to sympathize with the joyful person than with the sorrowful, which would indicate that we would shun the indigent, ill, and needy (Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* [Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1976], 103–11).


60. Ibid., 178. Connolly sees a hostility in identity-creation that may not be intrinsic to it, i.e., one could imagine perceiving differences without the response of envy and fear.


62. Ambiguity in establishing identity can be painful in a society that requires clear definitions: children of parents who have different racial, religious, or national identities than those of their community lose the comfort of simple solidarity.


64. Ibid., 178.

65. Although I do know a man who nostalgically remembers the late Richard J. Daley, mayor of Chicago, because opposition to Daley gave the man a sense of purpose he missed later when fighting more ambiguous targets.


68. Ibid., 293. Longtime readers of Schaar’s work might find his embrace of the Declaration of Independence ironic because throughout his essays (collected in *Legitimacy in the Modern State*) he criticizes such principles as independence, the document’s implied definition of equality, and the pursuit of hap-
piness while he advocates non-Jeffersonian principles of community, tradition, and memory.

69. This was one of the first conundrums I confronted in political theory when I discovered Rousseau in Schaar’s class in 1974. I told him that Rousseau’s model city in *The Social Contract* would exclude its eccentric creator. Schaar said, “You should decide whether that question really matters, and if you say yes, then you should confront it seriously, thinking about it day and night for at least a year. At the end of that time you will have to ask yourself, ‘Am I with Rousseau or against him?’ I have done that, and I have decided that I stand with him.”

70. Randolph Bourne, another important voice in this conversation, said that Americans need to learn to respect other cultures rather than requiring those cultures to abandon their particular identities in order to adopt an “American identity.” Bourne taught that American life would be richer if immigrants preserved what was best in the culture they brought to the United States (see “Transnational America,” in Randolph Bourne, *The Radical Will*, ed. Olaf Hansen [New York: Urisen, 1977], 248–64). Like Lincoln, James emphasized obedience to the laws. In a passage cited earlier, lawbreakers would not benefit from James’s famous tolerance (“Robert Gould Shaw,” 74). Yet, influenced by Darwin’s model of evolution, James wrote in *Will to Believe* that geniuses and their followers must transgress the laws to create new systems of belief and institutions (216–54). No less horrified by lynching than was Lincoln, James was more sanguine about the possibility of radical change.


72. Elaine Thomas notes that in Lincoln’s formulation the people do a fair measure of preaching, enforcing, and sacrificing on behalf of the national covenant.


74. I do not mean to imply that a common belief of the American citizenry in equality, self-government, and mutual respect is something to belittle.


76. J. Anthony Lukas portrays this transformation particularly well in *Common Ground* (New York: Random, 1986), the story of three families involved in a clash in Boston over school busing.

77. Follett, *The New State*, 25, 39. This goal is obviously more difficult on the
international level, but various exchange programs for students, teachers, and government leaders in which the languages, history, and customs of other cultures are taught may do some good.


79. For example, Christine Di Stefano criticizes Mill’s theory of tolerance on several grounds, including that of missing the tie between ideas and interests (Configurations of Masculinity: A Feminist Perspective on Modern Political Theory [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991], 169).


4. Faith and Doubt

1. One might say that the Soviet Union stands as a counterexample of the benign effects of humanism because atheism did not undermine the ferocity of Soviet communism. But, obviously, communism was based not on pragmatic humanism but on fervent faith in Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin, and dialectical materialism.


3. Ibid., 125.

4. Talks to Teachers on Psychology (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 165–66. Wolin comments: “In thinking about James here, I am reminded of Charles Taylor’s argument that you should always try deal with opponents by showing their case at its strongest, not by winning debater’s points against them. This takes James’s point one step further” (editorial comments).

5. Wolin editorial comments.

6. For Follett, see Chapter 3.


9. For an elaboration of the concept of “pluralist universe,” see James, “A


16. Ibid., 272.


18. Brian Wiener points out that Jefferson can be read in a Jamesian fashion if “holding” the truths is interpreted as “choose to believe” rather than “we know without having to prove it that our American view is that of God” (editorial comment).


21. Wolin editorial comments.


33. The religious sources of the civil rights movement are explored in Taylor Branch, Parting the Waters (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989).

5. Democratic Teaching

1. The problem of silence is not unique to universities in the 1990s. Describing Harvard in 1871 Henry Adams wrote: “The only privilege a student had that was worth his claiming was that of talking to the professor, and the professor was bound to encourage it. His only difficulty on that side was getting them to talk at all. He had to devise schemes to find what they were thinking about, and induce them to risk criticism from their fellows. Any large body of students stifles the student. No man can instruct more than half-a-dozen students at once. The whole problem of education is one of its cost in money” (Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams, ed. Ernest Samuels [1918; reprint, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974], 302).
4. “If that is supposed to sum up what has gone before, it is more than a feeling of power. I would assume that James is proposing actual institutional arrangements that would give the students actual power” (Wolin editorial comments).
7. In addition to Talks to Teachers, James wrote several essays on education, including “The True Harvard” (74–77), “Stanford’s Ideal Destiny” (102–6), and “The Social Value of the College-Bred” (106–12), all of which are contained in...


9. Gay Wilson Allen, *William James* (New York: Viking, 1967), 305. "This story does not show James to be democratic. It suggests that he was arbitrary—indulgent (if understandably) toward Stein and unfair to students who did the work. In fact, it indicates his elitism: he made the very able Stein above the law, a favorite preferred to her peers. Neither he nor Stein submitted to the judgment of the community" (McWilliams editorial comment).


11. James believed in teaching subjects historically so that human effort and will would be appreciated. Colleges should teach "biographical history, not that of politics merely, but of anything and everything so far as human efforts and conquests are factors that have played their part" ("Social Value of the College-Bred," 108). See also Gerald E. Myers, "Introduction" in *Talks to Teachers*, xix.

12. *Talks to Teachers*, 106. "The mind of him whose fields of consciousness are complex, and who, with the reasons for the action, see the reasons against it, and yet, instead of being palsied, acts in a way that takes the whole field into consideration—so, I say, is such a mind the ideal sort of mind that we should seek to reproduce in our pupils" (ibid.).

13. Ibid. James saw the typical southerner as all action, the northerner as all inhibition.


15. *Talks to Teachers*, 30, 32. James asserted, "You should regard your professional task as if it consisted chiefly and essentially in training the pupil to behavior" (26). He defined education as "the organization of acquired habits of conduct and tendencies to behavior" (27). Habits lead to destiny, and education changes habits. "The teacher's prime concern should be to ingrain into the pupil that assortment of habits that shall be most useful to him through life. Education is for behavior, and the habits are the stuff of which behavior consists" (48).

16. Ibid., 68. "You must simply work your pupil into such a state of interest in
what you are going to teach him that every other object of attention is banished from his mind; then reveal it to him so impressively that he will remember the occasion to his dying day; and finally fill him with a devouring curiosity to know what the next steps in connection with the subject are" (16). See also 73, 83, 107, and Myers, “Introduction,” xix–xxiii.

17. The tone of college work, James said, should be adult and professional (“The Proposed Shortening of the College Course,” in Essays, Comments, and Reviews, 40).

18. Ibid. and “Concerning Student Celebrations and Self-Government,” in Essays, Comments, and Reviews, 124. “I feel, as do my colleagues, that the sense of responsibility comes with freedom, and that a Harvard student can feel no greater challenge to his self control and control of others than when he realizes that the repute and safety of the college yard are committed entirely to his hands” (123).


20. He wrote in Some Problems of Philosophy, “If the best use of our colleges is to give young men a wider openness of mind and a more flexible way of thinking than special technical training can generate, then we hold that philosophy (taken in the broad sense . . . ) is the most important of all college studies.” The goal of philosophy may not be to find universal truth, but “one can never deny that philosophic study means the habit of always seeing an alternative, of not taking the usual for granted, of making conventionalities fluid again, of imagining foreign states of mind. In a word, it means the possession of mental perspective.” He said that students should get from their teachers, not doctrines, but “the living, philosophic attitude of mind, the independent personal look at all the data of life, and the eagerness to harmonize them” (4–5).

21. Ibid., 10–11; see also “The True Harvard,” 76.


26. Wolin editorial comments.

27. “Do people truly deprived of the knowledge of each thing that is, who lack a distinct pattern of it in their souls, who are unable to look at absolute truth like painters and constantly refer to it over there and contemplate it as accurately as possible, and then either set up standards here, if they must, of beauty, justice, and goodness, or guard and preserve the existing ones—do people like that seem better than blind men? . . . Then shall we make guardians them, or the ones who
... have also recognized each thing that is?" (Plato, *The Republic*, ed. and trans. Raymond Larson [Arlington Heights, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 1979], 484c–d, 147).


31. *Talks to Teachers*, 13. The intellectual influence would even extend to other nations, although James does not claim that Americans invented the intellectual temperament. Universities should "mediat[e] between America and Asia . . . helping the more intellectual men of both continents to understand each other better" ("Stanford's Ideal Destiny," 106).

32. "The Proposed Shortening of the College Course," 36. James wrote in his essay on "The Ph.D. Octopus" that the sole aim of graduate school should be to increase the number of learned people (*Essays, Comments, and Reviews*, 70). See also "Stanford's Ideal Destiny," 104, and *Will to Believe*, 260–61.


34. Ibid., 37, 38, 35.

35.Democratic colleges should have the widest possible influence, James believed. The more people who came into contact with the college-educated the better it would be for the country.


40. "Social Value of the College-Bred," 111. "If we are to be the yeast-cake for democracy's dough, if we are to make it rise with culture's preferences, we must see to it that culture spreads broad sails. We must shake the old double reefs out of the canvas into the wind and sunshine, and let in every modern subject, sure that any subject will prove humanistic, if its setting be kept only wide enough" (110).


43. "Social Value of the College-Bred," 107. "In picking out from history our heroes, and communing with their kindred spirits . . . each one of us may best
fortify and inspire what creative energy may lie in his own soul” ("The Importance of Individuals," *Will to Believe*, 260–61).

44. Wolin editorial comments.


47. “Social Value of the College-Bred,” 110.


50. Ibid., 106. “The great problem is to make our colleges tell in our national life: the leaders of every generation should as far as possible be college-bred men. Now college breeding doesn't by itself make leaders; leaders are made by natural ability and force. But the colleges ought so to cast their net that few young fellows of ability and force escape their toils” ("Proposed Shortening of the College Course," 38).

51. *Talks to Teachers*, 70.

52. Ibid., 68.

53. Ibid., 71–72.

54. Ibid., 30.


Conclusion


4. "Isn't this solution a little too easy? Doesn't it cut across the whole thrust of capitalist understandings of firms and organizations? One has to face up to the antidemocratic character of many of the institutions in the society, of which the school and the workplace are only two—most important perhaps, but only two. If you're going to advocate a democratic citizenry, you are going to have to be much more critical and expect much more. You will have to understand not only those who disagree with you but those who have a power which they would feel is threatened by the sort of formulations you are making here. This points to a problem in James. Does he come to terms or even recognize the difficulty of action in a hierarchical, institutional setting of the kind that you
describe? Does he not tend to presume most of the time a kind of debating society conception of political disagreement?" (Wolin editorial comments). In Chapters 1 and 3, I showed that James, while not concentrating on institutional analysis, was sensitive to the threat large, bureaucratic institutions posed to the type of citizenship he was attempting to develop in Americans.

5. I provide the bibliographic information about this revival in the section “Suggested Reading.”


12. Ibid., xi, 27, 89, 103; 139; 95.

13. Ibid., 135, 139.