Two of the three appendix chapters added here to the original text of William James on the Courage to Believe have already been published, in the form of articles, substantially as they appear here.

Along with the final chapter, entitled “James’s Voluntarism: Readiness, Willingness, or Will to Believe?” they present sharpened treatments of three central axial contentions from the original essay. The importance of these contentions had not, it seemed to me, been sufficiently appreciated even by the friendliest of my critics.

For I still contend, and expand on that contention here, without becoming unrelievedly deontological, that James’s ethics does boast a deontological “streak” which saves his “Will to Believe” argument from succumbing to the fatal flaw of “wishful thinking.” The presence of that “streak,” I go on to contend, both requires and permits a more accurate interrelationship of those four distinct attitudes—right, readiness, willingness, and resolute “will” to believe—as they interweave with and lend each other material support in the course of James’s argument. In my closing essay here, finally, previously unpublished, I try to clarify the unique epistemological situation implied in the oddity that, if we understand all the foregoing constituents as James does (when he is thinking “at top form”), then our consent to the “facts” at issue here does not, paradoxically, receive support from the weltanschaulich belief proposition. The true state of affairs implies something closer to the opposite: it might turn out to be the legitimate function of a resolute “willing faith” to lend those facts their aura of believability and thereby cement the reciprocal relationships implied in the right, will, willingness, and readiness to believe.
I am happy to express my thanks to The Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society for permission to reprint "The Will to Believe' and James's Deontological Streak," and to the International Philosophical Quarterly for permission to reprint "Faith and Facts in James's 'Will to Believe.'" I also wish to thank the Fordham University Press, and particularly Mr. Saverio Procario and Dr. Mary Beatrice Schulte, for their generous compliance with my request to unite these newer and older materials into this book.