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CHAPTER 3

Objects, Meanings, and Connections in My Life and Career

David E. Leary

On the wall of my home-office in Richmond, Virginia, are pictures of St. Francis of Assisi, William Shakespeare, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and William James. This may seem an odd collection to others. To me, it seems natural and right. Though I didn't plan the collection – each picture having gone up at a separate time – I see now that these four objects represent central meanings and connections in my life. Apparently even a relatively reflective academic can be too busy living his life to spend much time ruminating on the relations that hold it together. Yet I find that these relations are all around me, expressed by objects waiting to be noticed.

On the mantel over my home-office fireplace are pictures of my family. They are the most immediate source of meaning and connection in my life. Without them, I wouldn't be exactly who I am, and I cannot imagine that the difference would be an improvement. If I say little more about my family in what follows, it is only because I have a particular purpose, with a different audience in mind. My wife Marge and my children Emily, Elizabeth, and Matthew know how much they mean to me. Others, knowing that I am sustained by a loving family, can infer much with reasonable accuracy. The same sort of thing may be said with regard to my other relatives, my friends, and my colleagues.

Also in my office are several pictures – a painting and a photograph – of Yosemite. The photograph shows my grandmother on her honeymoon in the

early 1900s, standing before the glorious triple cascade of Yosemite Falls. It reminds me that some connections extend across generations. I too honeymooned in Yosemite. It is my favorite place on earth. For me, its well-known objects – Yosemite Falls, El Capitan, Happy Isles, and many others – exude meanings that can only be called spiritual. They point beyond themselves, connecting me to past experiences of awe and wonder and promising me the possibility of future retreat, reflection, and renewal. Without such experiences and possibilities – and without a continuing connection to nature in general, however infrequently I am able to indulge in it – I would be *less* me than I want to be.

My office is naturally full of books, files, papers, and all the other tools of my vocation. It is hard to imagine who I would be without this vocation – the vocation of the "scholar teacher." It is *this* me, who answers to both "scholar" and "teacher" – and, at certain points in the past, to "academic administrator" – that I have been asked to consider in relation to the rest of my life. In thinking about this invitation, I have found it useful to reflect on the meanings that I now connect with those pictures of St. Francis, Shakespeare, Goethe, and James.

St. Francis of Assisi

The fact that I was once named after St. Francis of Assisi – that for a while my name was Francis, or Frank – is something that bears discussion. This temporary name change came about in 1965 when I was inducted into the Franciscan Order at the beginning of novitiate at Mission San Miguel in central California. By then I had been in the Franciscan Seminary for six years, beginning with high school located just behind Mission Santa Barbara, and then extending through the first two years of college at Mission San Luis Rey. I was working my way, year by year, towards priesthood in the Catholic Church. Though I never reached ordination, I remained a Franciscan friar ("brother") for more than two years after my year of novitiate. During those years, I completed college and undertook theological studies at the Franciscan School of Theology in the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. What all of this reflects – that I was born into a loving and devout Catholic family, that I took religion very seriously, and that I responded to a religious calling – says much about who I am and about my continuing frame of mind, even though I have long since stopped "believing" in the traditional religious sense. Since the early 1970s – primarily as the result of long-term personal development, but secondarily because of my

negative reaction to the American Catholic bishops saying, in essence, that the Vietnam War was not an appropriate topic for the Church's moral consideration – I have not gone to church or engaged in any other religious observances, except on rare occasions, generally related to weddings and funerals. Nevertheless, I continue to think of myself as being "spiritual" insofar as questions of meaning and the pursuit of good remain central to my sense of who I am.

This illustrates, I suppose, that anyone raised in an environment that is permeated with a deep belief that everything ultimately makes sense, that order exists in the universe despite apparent chaos, and that whatever is mysterious or troubling can be turned to account, if only by God, is likely to go through the rest of life in search of meaning, even if he or she has come to believe that meaning must be made as much as found. This search, which I have "always" felt to be intimately connected to a person's identity and hence to a person's commitments and orientation, comes even more "naturally," I also suppose, to someone raised within a system of reference that defines what is good to do on Sunday morning and what is bad to do on Friday night.

If One Answer was no longer sufficient to my commitments and orientation, other answers had to be sought. If those answers no longer reflected Divine Knowledge or Will, they had at least to fit within some alternative frame of reference, however idiosyncratic in origin and finite in reach. The amazing thing, in retrospect, is how relatively easy it was for me to shift from a belief in absolutes to the construction of contingent understandings. I am convinced that this more or less smooth transition was facilitated by my preceding study of the Bible and theology from an honest, scholarly, historical perspective. This study not only demystified the notion of God, but it also underscored the role of human agents in representing the supernatural as well as the natural. (My reading of religious mystics during these years – and especially my realization of the role of metaphor in their attempts to describe their ineffable experiences – is relevant here, though it will be discussed later.)

I was also deeply impressed by the spirit of openness displayed by the Vatican Council and the courageous advancements associated with the Ecumenical Movement. At the same time, the Civil Rights Movement and the War Against Poverty did much to help me understand those who came from backgrounds different from mine. My specifically *Franciscan* orientation facilitated a growing respect for, and desire to comprehend, other points of view. Not only love of others, but service to others was and remains a hallmark of the Franciscan way. Even before my year of novitiate, I had devoted a summer to working with the poor on the east side of San José, California; spent time in

Mexico assisting a priest who ministered to the physical as well as religious needs of destitute people; and – inspired by the example of Cesar Chavez – worked with *braceros* in the picking fields and orchards of Santa Clara County. In each case, I learned valuable lessons about the resilience and positive spirit that often typify those who endure dire poverty and discrimination. I also recall another powerful experience, listening one evening to Saul Alinsky organizing a group of citizens to improve conditions for the underprivileged in Pasadena, California. I was seeing life from new perspectives at the same time that I was learning to understand biblical stories and God Himself (or Herself!) from different perspectives. Although I was concerned about the possibility of losing my faith, I sensed that I was somehow *expanding* my faith, getting not less but more in touch with "reality," now seen – like the Bible – as subject to variant interpretations.

Around the same time, while still in college, I came into association with Carl Rogers and the Encounter Group Movement that was just then gathering momentum. Rogers had recently moved to La Jolla, not far from where I then lived (at Mission San Luis Rey). He and his associates were reaching out to religious communities as possible conduits of his insights regarding the optimal functioning of the human self and the positive impact that less guarded experiences – and better communication – could have in the enhancement of individual lives and the development of a better world. For all the simplistic tenets, group pressure, silly aphorisms, and occasional catastrophes associated with the Encounter Group Movement and with the many forms of "sensitivity training" that were then being espoused, Rogers and all that he stood for made a huge difference in my life, not least in convincing me that I could pursue what still mattered to me by switching my goal from the priesthood to counseling or clinical psychology. Being a psychologist (as I intended when I left the seminary at the end of 1968) may seem a very secular calling in relation to the priesthood, but in fact it was not so far removed from the religious roots, concerns, and experiences of my earlier life. It was only later that I learned that Rogers himself had once been in a seminary and that his distinctive psychological orientation grew out of experiences, in 1922, at a World Student Christian Federation's Conference in Peking, China.

By the time I left the seminary, I was in deep sympathy with the Humanistic Psychology Movement, had seen and heard both Abraham Maslow and Rollo May, had witnessed the infamous Fritz Perls swaying on a porch at Esalen, and had decided to earn a master's degree in psychology at San José State University (then still San José State College) to make up for my lack of undergraduate courses in psychology. (I had taken only a few courses in psy-

chology, during consecutive summers at San Diego State and the University of California at Santa Barbara.) What I didn't fully appreciate at the time was the extent to which the education I had received and the educational community I had experienced in my nine and a half years in the seminary (reaching back to the beginning of high school) would prove so relevant to who I became, what I would value, and all that I've done in my later career. For in my seminary-college I had not only majored in philosophy, but had also completed the near-equivalent of second and third majors in history and English. Moreover, since our seminary faculty and student body were small and lived together, faculty and students were in frequent contact and developed a strong sense of community. (No, I was never aware nor was I ever a victim of inappropriate "close contact" during my seminary years.) We students not only prayed and studied together, we also played and worked together. Since then I have understood the power of community as a context for identity, trust, support, and strength of character.

Our faculty were both scholarly and dedicated to their responsibilities and to us. I also had a superb set of classmates, including Joseph Chinnici, who subsequently received his doctorate in history from Oxford, became (and remains) a leading historian of the Catholic Church in the United States, and served for almost a decade as the provincial of the Franciscans in the western United States, and Thomas Coates, who earned his PhD in psychology from Stanford University and is now a leading researcher and practitioner of behavioral medicine, specializing in the prevention of HIV and AIDS. Other classmates have been similarly successful in architecture, city planning, communications, community action, legal affairs, and the like. Though few were eventually ordained – such were the times – I suspect that each of them would say that his life was changed, entirely or mostly for the better, by his experiences in the seminary.

If my seminary years confirmed my interest in service to others, nurtured my inclination to search for meaning, provided a marvelous educational background, and exposed me to the power of community, it also reinforced the lessons my parents had taught me regarding the importance of following the dictates of conscience. Soon after leaving the seminary, I had to consider what to do about my opposition to the Vietnam War. I decided that my opposition compelled me to be a conscientious objector. I was approved for that status, but was never called to serve in that capacity. (My lottery number was among the last to be selected.)

As I look back, I realize that it was remarkable and fortunate to be associated with many of the fundamental challenges that were transforming both

Church and society: the Vatican Council and all it signaled regarding changes in the Catholic Church, the Anti-War and Pro-Peace Movements, the Civil Rights and Anti-Poverty Movements, and the Encounter Group and Humanistic Psychology Movements. Although I haven't previously mentioned it, my life was also energized by my peripheral but nonetheless exciting relation to the revolution that was going on in the realm of music. Though I was no more than a bit player, I helped to usher folk and folk rock music into church settings and enjoyed opportunities to sing with a group of friends in other venues. As a last hurrah – a few years after I left the seminary – we performed in Europe for a month, even singing war protest songs before American troops stationed in Germany. (They were appreciative.) The only major current of the time in which I did not participate was the drug revolution, though I was affected by it as various friends and acquaintances experimented with mind-altering substances.

Reflecting on all of this more than 30 years later, I find that there is much to say in support of the many analogies that have been posed over the millennia regarding the relationship between the macrocosm and microcosm: What was happening in the world at large was clearly reflected in my own little sphere and in my own individual self. The times they were a changin', and so was I.

William Shakespeare

When I put Shakespeare's picture on my home-office wall some years ago, I did so out of respect for him – particularly for what he contributed to world culture – but I realize now, in retrospect, that his picture can also be seen as having more particular significance. If Shakespeare is the apotheosis of literature in general, his picture bears witness to the overall importance of literature in my life and career.

When I was fairly young I loved to read. In grade school and high school I read all that I could, and in college I had a charismatic teacher, Ben McCormick, who inspired me to appreciate the insights and beauty of literature. By the end of my college years, as mentioned, I had earned the virtual equivalent of a degree in literature, and to this day, I look forward to those moments when I can *lose myself* in literature – whether poetry, drama, or novels – so that the vicarious experiences conveyed by literature can enrich the quotidian understandings and the very life that literature helps me to escape. Go figure. What, after all, do I really care about the 19th-century British navy? Yet in reading Patrick O'Brian's wonderful Aubrey-Maturin novels I've

learned not only about life in the 19th century, but also about the operations of human character, both in myself and in others. Literature isn't simply about learning what you could have picked up in a history book or a psychology article; it's about experiencing things in ways that cannot be reduced to conventional formulations. Literature may be composed of words, but those words convey meanings and connections that transcend referential stipulations. All experience exceeds immediate and full comprehension, but literary experience does it – or at least can do it – in particularly concentrated and powerful ways.

None of this was in the forefront of my mind when I started studying psychology at San José State in the fall of 1969, yet as I look back it seems reasonable to connect my early unease with certain aspects of psychology to the sensitivities that had been fostered through my engagement with literature and with my experiential understanding of the processes involved in its production and interpretation. (My study of biblical literature and of the hermeneutic tradition was relevant here as well.) Before long, I had concluded that contemporary psychology was doing a poor job of characterizing the creative and expressive powers of the human mind. It was offering a reductive vision of the mind, which made the actuality of literature and the understandings that come from it all but incomprehensible. The computer-driven analogs of then emerging cognitive psychology served only to illustrate the foresightedness of Jonathan Swift's satirical treatment of naive theories of the mechanical generation of concepts and texts. The picture of the mind that was offered by psychology was pale and thin compared to the richness and complexity of the human imagination, as I had experienced it as a lover and student of literature.

Largely for this reason, I did my master's thesis on the human imagination. This thesis changed the course of my life and career. Most importantly, the call for "subjects" for this study attracted the woman who eventually became my wife – the former Marjorie Bates. Marge responded to my advertisement because she found the topic of interest. (She scored among the highest on several indices of imaginative capability.) Marge and I were married a little more than a year later in June 1972. After more than three decades of marriage, I have no reason to regret the topic of my thesis. Such happiness and success as I have had are due in large part to the support and encouragement that she has given to me. Beyond that, Marge was the unwitting reason – in Aristotelian terms, the "efficient cause" – of my shift from counseling or clinical psychology to the history and philosophy of psychology. Before I

discuss that shift, I want to make one other comment about the motivation of my master's thesis.

While I was at San José State, the war in Vietnam – and public debate about it – had been heating up, as had similar events and controversies regarding civil rights and other issues pertaining to human welfare and social justice. It was a very confusing time in which being a "good guy" or a "bad guy" – or, more importantly, being "right" or "wrong" – was a matter of perception, which shifted frequently. (I recall, for instance, having to walk through a gauntlet of angrily chanting student protesters in order to get to class one day – thus seeming to be a supporter of the war – when in fact, on the previous day, I had myself sung at a major anti-war rally. Boycotting classes simply wasn't *my* way of showing concern about the war, though I understood and accepted that it was *their* way.) My interest in the imagination, however much it was based on sensitivities fostered by literature, was also based on my concerns about "Where do we go from here? How will we be able to move beyond the outrage and animosity generated by the war and by other ongoing social conflicts?" In this context, I was inspired by William F. Lynch's insightful little book on *Images of Hope: Imagination as Healer of the Hopeless* (1965). Thus, my research, as far removed as it must have seemed from the realities of current events, was motivated in part by them. I mention this too as background for my then growing incredulity about then current views of science as "value free." Not only did I doubt that science was ever completely value free, but I also felt strongly that it *shouldn't* be. The best protection against undue bias is not pretense of unattainable neutrality, but rather an upfront admission of what values and concerns have motivated a particular study (why was the topic chosen? what long-term consequence was hoped for? and so on). My experience at this time prepared me to be open to the newer, more historically based philosophy of science that I would encounter during and after my time at the University of Chicago.

Now, what about my change of interest from applied psychology to the history and philosophy of psychology? Because Marge was wrapping up her education at San José State at the time of our marriage, we needed to stay in the area for another year or two before I could head off, as then expected, to a doctoral program in counseling or clinical psychology. Fortuitously, as we considered our short-term options, I received a call from the Franciscan School of Theology, asking if (master's degree in hand) I would be interested in serving as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Psychology and Religion and teaching courses on psychology and religion as well as on personality. Had Marge already completed her studies at San José State, I would have said no to this invitation and in all probability would have gone on to a satisfying career

as a counseling or clinical psychologist. (I was already doing some counseling on the side, had received positive feedback, and had found this work to be very gratifying.) Since Marge wasn't finished with her degree, I said yes and embarked on the teaching aspect of my career.

As has often happened since that time, it was students who then set me straight. Because of my background in philosophy and history as well as literature, I naturally – unthinkingly, really – organized my courses to provide the requisite philosophical and historical contexts for thoughtful consideration of the nature and functioning of personality as well as the relations between religion and psychology. The students pointed out how unusual my approach was and told me that they found it both enlightening and useful. Thus, during that year, besides coming to realize that I enjoyed teaching, which would not have been a significant part of a career in counseling or clinical psychology, I became aware of the need for at least some persons associated with psychology to elucidate the discipline's historical and philosophical foundations; I learned that I enjoyed the kind of research involved in doing so; and I discovered that – through no foresight of my own – I was reasonably prepared to do so. I should also admit that, as much as I enjoyed counseling and took satisfaction in helping others, I had a gnawing concern about the long-term effects of a career in this area: Could I stay fresh and effective after dealing with some of the same problems over and over?

Hence, I started thinking about applying to graduate programs in the history of science, with the idea of focusing on the history of psychology and giving attention, as appropriate, to philosophical issues. I took a broad view of the matter, however, seeing the history of psychology as a subset of the larger story of how humans have understood themselves and their world. The implicit questions I asked as I thought about this topic – which I defined as "the history of consciousness" – were: "Under what conditions did people stop turning as much to custom, myth, religion, philosophy, or even literature in order to understand themselves?" and "When and why did they begin asking psychologists to help them decide who they were, how to live, and what their futures held?" My later research on the connections between religion and psychology, philosophy and psychology, and most recently literature and psychology has reflected these initial questions as well as my multidisciplinary educational background. My research on metaphorical thinking also stems ultimately from those original questions about the history of consciousness, even though the connections have not always been obvious.

Marge and I ended up going to the University of Chicago, for which I will always be grateful. When we arrived there in August, 1974, we were

welcomed into an extraordinary intellectual community, and we formed lasting relationships with teachers like George Stocking, the well-known historian of anthropology, and Stephen Toulmin, the noted philosopher. I was fortunate to work with Leonard Krieger and Keith Baker in history and with Sal Maddi and Norman Bradburn in psychology, and I had Robert Richards (now a full professor with multiple appointments at the University of Chicago) as a fellow student who shared my interest in the history of psychology and related fields. One of my fondest memories of Chicago is of a seminar on the history of psychology that was planned and directed by Bob and me, for which we received graduate credit. The other "students" in the seminar were the three faculty members who had approved this unusual arrangement. I suspect that this could have happened only at Chicago. Enjoying colleagues and opportunities like these, while also having access to a world-class library, was more than I could have asked.

I was profiting so much from my studies that I was almost disappointed to learn, midway through my second year, that there was a faculty opening in the History and Theory of Psychology Graduate Program in the Department of Psychology at the University of New Hampshire. The position was so perfect and the job market so tight that I applied for and then accepted the position, when it was offered, with the proviso that I be allowed to start a semester later than advertised. The reason for this condition was simple: I had not yet proposed, much less defended, my dissertation. During my interview I had never claimed to have started my dissertation; my future colleagues had simply assumed that the research I presented was from my dissertation. (In fact, I had expected the seminar project that I presented to evolve into the first chapter of my dissertation.) In the event, it *became* my dissertation, and since most (other) dissertation proposals are far too grandiose, I was once again fortunate that "reality" changed my plans in a way that served me well. After eight months of intense work, I was told that my dissertation, which focused on the historical influence of Immanuel Kant on the development of scientific psychology, had been completed in record time and had been accorded special honors. Soon thereafter, in early January, 1977, Marge and I were traversing a very snowy and icy landscape, as we drove to New Hampshire in the aftermath of the huge blizzard of 1976.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

I have admired Goethe for many years. He was not only a great writer, he was a scholar, a scientist, and a statesman, and in each arena he contributed

something of value. Even in old age, he refused to stand on past laurels; he always *lived forward.* He moved beyond past triumphs and even changed fields of endeavor when he felt that life demanded it. I'd like to think that my own life and career have reflected, to some small degree, the same willingness and ability to handle multiple responsibilities, to assume new challenges, and to move on when the time comes. I have tried to contribute as much as possible as teacher, scholar, colleague, and administrator. Although these various roles have been intricately related, time spent on any one of them has necessarily meant time not spent on others. Like every other academic, I have had to set priorities and make choices.

My first priority has always been teaching, which is to say, my primary concerns have revolved around my students, their learning, and their development. That doesn't mean that I haven't enjoyed research, deeply, for its own sake. Far from it. But I have always felt that one of the important reasons for engaging in research is that it helps assure that I deserve the privilege of teaching and that I have the best possible things to say, both in the classroom and through presentations and publications. My endeavors as colleague and administrator have similarly revolved around my fundamental desire to contribute to the learning and development of others. Indeed, the first challenge I assumed upon arriving at the University of New Hampshire was to create and offer meaningful courses. At the undergraduate level, besides several courses in the history of psychology, I was asked to teach Introduction to Psychology, the Psychology of Personality, Abnormal Psychology, and several other topics. I also participated in the development of interdisciplinary courses and programs, including an undergraduate Humanities Program, offering courses that typically drew upon psychology, history, philosophy, and literature, and sometimes theology, in order to address fundamental issues faced by the self and society. At the graduate level, where students could earn a PhD in psychology with a specialty in the history and theory of psychology, I taught an open-ended series of seminars ranging from historiography and the philosophy of psychology to different problem areas in the history of psychology.

Having to develop and teach undergraduate and graduate courses, sometimes very broad in coverage and sometimes very narrow, advanced my own education. The same thing can be said about the master's and doctoral committees on which I served, both inside and outside the Department of Psychology. And I was blessed from the beginning with my own graduate students, from whom I learned much and whose teaching and research were frequently inspiring. Few satisfactions in academic life have matched the plea-

sure of having former graduate students produce courses or research that I would have loved to call my own.

By the time I left UNH in 1989, my academic title – Professor of Psychology, History, and the Humanities – reflected the variety of my teaching interests and commitments over the preceding 12 years. Most of my teaching, however, was in psychology, and it went well enough that no one seemed to care (or even remember) that my PhD was in history, with a specialty in the history and philosophy of psychology, rather than in psychology proper. From the time I arrived at UNH, I have considered myself a psychologist who happens to use historical and philosophical methodologies in order to assess critically the nature, history, prospects, and means of understanding of the human self (psychology being one of those means). These ultimate concerns have been clearer in the teaching that I've done since my return to regular faculty status at the University of Richmond – in courses on Selfhood in particular, but also in courses on Religion and Psychology, Psychology in American Society and Culture, and Exploring Human Experience. But it was hopefully apparent, also, to perceptive students in my courses at UNH. In any case, although I see myself as a psychologist interested ultimately in how the human self comprehends and makes its way through the world and through a life that is framed by historical contingencies, I have been fortunate to be seen, also, as an historian and philosopher. This has created multiple audiences for my research and provided occasions for useful feedback. Membership in various communities of scholars has sustained me as it has sustained so many others.

In the early years of my career I published several articles and a couple of chapters based upon my dissertation, but I was anxious to move on to other projects. Once again good fortune struck. In the fall of 1977, as chair of my department's Colloquium Committee, I arranged for Sigmund Koch, an eminent psychologist who was also a distinguished philosopher, historian, and critic of the discipline, to come to UNH. He and I hit it off particularly well, and this led to his subsequent request that I serve with him as co-organizer of a scholarly program that would provide a retrospective assessment of scientific psychology on the occasion of its 1979 centennial (as dated from the founding of Wilhelm Wundt's laboratory in Leipzig, Germany). Fortunately, I accepted. It was a lot of work for a young assistant professor to take on, but the 60-hour program that resulted, offered as part of the 1979 annual convention of the American Psychological Association, was eventually revised and published as *A Century of Psychology as Science* (Koch and Leary, [1985] 1992). This 42-chapter book not only received the Association of American Publishers

Award for "the most outstanding scholarly and professional book in 1985 on the social and behavioral sciences," it was reissued by the APA in 1992, with a new Afterword and Postscript, as one of a small number of specially designated "centennial publications" commemorating APA's 100th anniversary. It remains an important historical marker of the discipline's history.

I mention this program and book partly because they helped to establish my reputation as an historian of psychology, but also because they illustrate a powerful lesson that I try to pass on to my students: Fulfill your primary responsibilities as best you can, but also stay vigilant for unexpected opportunities. Seize those opportunities when they arise, and make the most of them. Fortune seems to favor those who are prepared for it, wittingly or not.

My work with Koch, plus my own independent research, resulted in an invitation to be a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Stanford, California. Accepting this invitation allowed Marge and me to spend a wonderful sabbatical year near our extended families and old friends. We arrived in California in July, 1982, with two children in tow; a third child was on his way when we headed back to New Hampshire in August, 1983. During that year I learned a great deal from the other fellows and moved from somewhat casual to serious research on the role of metaphor and rhetoric in psychology. I also organized a very successful fellows seminar on the nature and function of metaphor, and I began soliciting research by others, which eventually led to an edited volume on *Metaphors in the History of Psychology* (1990).

All of this organizational and editorial work, like the work I had been doing at UNH as co-director of the History and Theory of Psychology Program, demonstrated my ability and inclination to assume leadership roles, both as a scholar and teacher. My experiences in almost every one of these roles had been personally gratifying, especially to the extent that they ended up stimulating the learning of others. Hence, it was a natural step for me to become chairperson of the Department of Psychology several years after I returned to UNH – the year before I became a full professor in 1988. As I had done in committees with colleagues and in other administrative roles, I tried as department chairperson to do all I could to make a positive difference. I was successful enough in facilitating the teaching and research of my colleagues, and in overseeing the enhancement of curricula and facilities, that my attention was drawn in the spring of 1989 to an advertisement for the deanship at the University of Richmond. Being a dean had not been an objective while I served as chairperson, just as being a chairperson had not been an objective while serving as a faculty member, but it followed, almost logically, from the

enjoyment and satisfaction of doing what I could do, at each previous stage, to improve the quality of life and work within the environment that constituted my academic home.

Many faculty do not understand why a more or less successful colleague would agree, much less want, to be a chairperson or dean. However, as a faculty member, I could only teach so many students and could only do so much research. But as a chairperson or dean I could facilitate the teaching and research of 17 – or 200 – other colleagues, and through them have an impact, however indirect, upon the satisfaction, productivity, learning, and growth of many more individuals. Even now, happy as I am to be fully re-engaged in teaching and research, this rationale makes good sense to me. I take pride in having done all that I could, as dean, to enhance a particular academic institution during a period of significant change, and I am particularly happy to have fostered a sense of community – of common endeavor and achievement – among more or less like-minded and like-committed individuals.

Besides serving as Dean of Arts and Sciences at the University of Richmond for 13 years, from 1989 to 2002, I have contributed leadership to various professional organizations (e.g., as president of APA's division of the History of Psychology, as president of its division of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology, and as chairperson of the American Conference of Academic Deans). But since the fall of 2002, following a sabbatical in my final year as dean, I have enjoyed the opportunity to approach both teaching and research from fresh perspectives. As a University Professor at the University of Richmond, I have designed and taught new courses, several of which are co-listed by multiple departments, and I have initiated an exciting new line of research. Entering the final decade of my career, I can think of nothing I would rather do than enjoy the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of a faculty member.

William James

If St. Francis epitomizes the influence of religion in my life, and Shakespeare suggests the relevance of literature to my career, and Goethe symbolizes the multiple commitments reflected in my professional activities, then William James expresses the tone and trajectory of my intellectual life. I have yet to encounter another historical figure who so completely represents the intellectual virtues and methodological values that I espouse: James was earnest, honest, and open-minded; he sought the truth without needing to believe – or pretending to believe – that he would ever completely possess it.

He respected the experiences of every human being and criticized those who were blind to the dignity and worth of other individuals. And when it came to his own academic work, he was not only among the first pioneers of the "new psychology" that evolved into the psychology of today, but he also helped to initiate a philosophical orientation that maintains its vitality and relevance right up to our own time, both within the discipline of philosophy and across a range of other disciplines, psychology included. Finally, with regard to the basic concerns of this chapter, James wrote insightfully about the intimate relations between person and perspective, between temperament and cognition, between – in effect – life and career; and his treatment of the human self still commands attention, more than 100 years after its classic expression in *The Principles of Psychology* ([1890] 1981).

I feel no embarrassment in noting that more than one-third of my publications have dealt with James in one way or another and that more than ten per cent have focused primarily on him and his work. I am proud to be associated with James in this way and to affirm my allegiance to what he stood for, including his openness to the value of religion despite the fact that he himself was not a "believer" and could not claim to have had a religious experience. Indeed, my current research – on the impact of literature on James's life and work – draws upon and in many ways culminates much of my previous scholarly work, including my research on the role of metaphor and rhetoric in the history of psychology. (In light of the way I have organized this chapter, it might be interesting for me to note that among the things I've been studying is the influence of Shakespeare and Goethe on James and his work. It turns out that their influence was substantial. As for my other organizational figure, James read a number of works about St. Francis and considered him to be a primary example of religious healthy-mindedness. So these four figures are connected after all – and not just in my mind and on my office wall.)

Though I admire much of what James wrote, I hasten to add that my own views on the self emerged, as James himself would have wished, from my own experiences as well as from observations of the apparent experiences and actions of others, reinforced by a wide range of reading and rumination. From early on, as noted above, I wanted to understand the self. When I first encountered James's thought (as when I previously encountered Carl Rogers's experience-based views on the self), I had a strong feeling of having found someone who had a genius for expressing *my* incipient insights. I was particularly struck by James's ability to discuss complex matters in a straightforward yet subtle and supple manner, using fresh metaphors and apt examples to give form to things unknown (as Shakespeare described the creative process).

James's use of metaphor was particularly attractive to me. I felt drawn to it and to him, based partly (no doubt) on my own previous realization that metaphor is our means of first and last resort. Earlier I mentioned my reading of the writings of religious mystics. What had struck me was the number of times mystics said, in essence, that "my experience is ineffable, it exceeds anything that I can possibly say, it is beyond all words, *but if I must say something about it...*," and then went on to speak of their experiences, necessarily, in metaphorical terms. The best they could do was to say their experiences were *like* this and *like* that. They had to compare their unique experiences to experiences that people shared in common. Even back then, I had a sense that mystical experience could be seen as a metaphor for *all* experience. Every experience, if attended to closely enough, is one of a kind; but if we wish to convey its essence to others, we have to express it through words, images, or some other form of representation with which they are familiar.

What attracted me to James was the fact that his thought stays so close to the descriptive, empirical level, without ascending, too precipitously and arrogantly, into an abstract and formalized theory that claims both too much and too little. Instead of refined and polished theory, James's thought typically conveys a compelling theoretical perspective – an angle of vision that highlights certain aspects of whatever he is describing and that often continues to influence one's understanding long after its provenance has been forgotten. In an age in which the scholarly work of too many academics could be subsumed under the slogan "Have Theory, Will Travel," I have been deeply impressed by James's more modest, but ultimately (to me) more truthful approach. As I was learning independently through my study of the philosophy of science, the distance between fact and theory has often been excessive. And even when a constitutive relationship exists, theory has too often been wagging the facts rather than facts constraining theory.

As one of my teachers, Stephen Toulmin, has put it: One should strive to be "reasonable" even if one doesn't believe that Reason is the one and only means of making sense of experience, and one can be "truthful" even if one is not persuaded that Truth can be attained once and for all. James was a proponent of this tempered approach, and he was an exemplar of an admirable combination of traits: He always strove to reach beyond what was known and thought, yet he never assumed that the point from which he reached at any given time would be the point from which he or others would reach on another occasion. James realized that today's best angle of vision might not be tomorrow's. The stream of experience may be similar from one time to

another, but it will also be different. And the same can be said of the self, which after all may be understood as the point of relative sameness within our ongoing experience.

"Relative sameness" suggests a significant shift, for me as for many others, from an earlier, more or less static view of the self (as an abstracted, universalized, resolutely identical "I" that functioned essentially as a secular surrogate for the religious "soul") to a much more organic view of the self as developing over time – a view that provides a much better representation of my own experiences as an historically situated and changing "me."

Although James had long since given a finely nuanced phenomenology of the historically embedded self, the psychological literature was not yet "back up to date" when I first started teaching courses on the psychology of personality. With the passage of time, however, a pertinent literature – based increasingly on empirical research as well as conceptual insights drawn from philosophy, anthropology, literary and cultural studies – has emerged. In my recent offerings of a course on Selfhood, I have used a wide range of readings, including George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) and Dan McAdams's *The Stories We Live By* (1993). I want my students to understand how we come to terms with our experience through metaphor and how we understand ourselves through stories. I offer them a picture of the self that is more like a movie than a snapshot, a self that is dynamic and changing, yet has detectable structure and continuity, as I've tried to convey regarding my own self in this chapter. Along with others, I've found that this structure and continuity are described more readily through the metaphor and practice of narrative than through the more traditional metaphor of portraiture. Unlike a static portrait, the self – at least as I experience it and James and others have described it – is open-ended and subject to revision, as later experience casts new light on former experience.

James was among the first to be aware that individuals can and do have multiple stories to tell about themselves. Given the constraints to which we are subject, both as embodied individuals and linguistic storytellers, most of the self-narratives that people tell are variants or subplots of their more or less coherent master plot. In some cases, these stories are so different that the tellers may be said to have multiple selves, sometimes including "hidden selves," as James called them. James was open to all sorts of possibilities, even of a sort so radical that John Dewey spoke later of "the vanishing self" in James's psychology. However, on my own experiential grounds, I have categorized James's thoughts in this regard as peripheral to my considerations on the self (as indeed they were to his own). In fact, on the basis of particularly powerful

experiences, I have drawn a line short of the kind of ultra-constructionist views that make the self *only* a fiction created by time and circumstance. The struggle to express my experience has at times been quite tangible, involving a clear sense of a gap between experience and expression. That is, I am sometimes aware that the best words I can find are inadequate to a full mapping of the exact contours of my experience. At those moments, I have no doubt that it is language – the particular word, metaphor, or story I am using – that falls short, is not quite right, and that my experience is a reality more basic than language, as shown by the fact that it resists the pull of inadequate words. How else am I to explain, for instance, the insistent conviction that: "That isn't exactly what I want to say," or "That doesn't capture how I think or feel," or "That isn't precisely what I mean"? Experience, in other words, rather than language or any other representational system, is the rock bottom upon which I base my view of the self and my knowledge of the world. We are not simply products of some kind of linguistic or paralinguistic game that we play with others, or that "culture" plays through us, as some theorists have suggested.

Who am "I"? I am a person who is trying to do his best to live in a way that enhances my existence and that of others, and who strives to make sense of my experience of life, world, and self, often in relation to other objects in my environment, to the persons and things that give me meaning, and to the varied connections that I have established and that have helped to establish me. As I come full circle now in my reflections on the objects, meanings, and connections in my life and career, I am reminded again of the important relation between the individual and the community, which I have noted several times in this chapter. Community is important to the individual, not because the self is determined by community, but because the self's experiences and expressions are significantly enhanced or limited by the kind of community in which it exists. And this enhancement or limitation works in both directions. As James once wrote: "The community stagnates without the impulse of the individual." And as he hastened to add: "The impulse dies away without the sympathy of the community." I am fortunate to have my own interests and inclinations encouraged and rewarded by my family, friends, and scholarly communities of which I have been a member.

Conclusion

As I think back on what I have written and note aspects of my life that barely appear in this chapter, or do not appear at all, I realize that in my home-office, too, is a plaque commemorating my selection as the Best Little League Player

in Burbank, California, in 1957; a photograph showing me standing at the beach, surfboard under arm, in 1968; a guitar offering silent testimony to my short but exciting career as a semi-professional musician in the late 1960s and early 1970s; a child-made ceramic sign pronouncing me "Dad" in very bright colors, from the mid-1980s; cards from my wife containing messages that sustained my efforts when my energy lagged; and a stack of annual calendars containing hundreds and hundreds of notations about dinners, movies, trips, and other engagements that have invigorated the course of my life and career. If I were to walk into other rooms of my home, additional objects would call out meanings and connections that have not been articulated in this narrative sketch. But I'm not about to complain that my life has been richer than I have been able to express in these few pages.

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