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THE DIVIDED SELF OF WILLIAM JAMES

This book offers a powerful new interpretation of the philosophy of William James. It focuses on the multiple directions in which James's philosophy moves and the inevitable tensions that arise as a result.

The first part of the book explores a range of James's doctrines in which he refuses to privilege any particular perspective, be it that of the scientist, moral agent, artist, or mystic. The second part of the book turns to those doctrines where James favors the perspective of mystical experience. Richard Gale then attempts to reconcile the relativistic tendencies with James's account of mystical experience. An appendix considers the distorted picture of James's philosophy that has been passed down to us through the interpretations of his work by John Dewey.

Such is the range of James's philosophy that this stimulating new approach will find readers among those interested in the history of modern philosophy, especially pragmatism, as well as in the history of ideas, religion, and American studies.

Richard M. Gale is a professor of philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh.

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for

Mari Mori

mother-in-law extraordinaire

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Most of all I thank Maya – “Celeste Maya” – for teaching me what life is all about through her inspiring presence during the past forty-one years.

Works by William James and others are referred to in the body of the book by abbreviations given in the Bibliography of Works Cited at the end of the book. I will use feminine pronouns in the Introduction and odd-numbered chapters and masculine ones in the even-numbered ones.

I hope that this book will appeal to a wider audience than just professional, academic philosophers, especially as William James tried so hard throughout his career to reach this wider audience. However, there will be occasions, such as in Chapters 5 and 6, where technical issues concerning meaning and truth are discussed, that will elude nonprofessionals, and I suggest that they just skim through these sections. Doing so should not undermine their grasp of the overall thesis of this book. I regret these technical asides, but there is no way to

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assess the adequacy of James's accounts of meaning and truth without engaging in them. What I most hope is that my readers, be they professional philosophers or not, will have fun reading this book. If they do, I shall have succeeded in capturing the true spirit of James's philosophy.