

*Editorial Note*

William James (1842-1910) influenced the American intellectual history of the second half of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX in various fields, due to his activity as a writer, a teacher and experimentalist.

William James was a participant in the germinal, legendary meetings of the “Metaphysical Club”, in 1872, together with C. S. Peirce, Chauncey Wright, O. W. Holmes Jr., and others, in conversations that would lead to the first formulas, close to the future “pragmatism”, regarding the sense of evolution and chance, the truth, the value of the experience and the rejection of metaphysics. What one may call “characteristically American” in the Pragmatist way of thinking was perhaps launched in this period of the intellectual history of the United States.

After that initial period W. James was the supporter of the philosophical doctrines identified with the American pragmatism regarding especially the concepts of consciousness, experience, belief and truth. He was the responsible, at Harvard University, for the Psychology Courses oriented towards the experimental perspective, and left us an important treatise on the *Principles of Psychology*. We recognize him as the profound connoisseur of the contemporary European thought in German and French, and his *Letters* reveal an intense dialogue and debate on themes of psychology, metaphysics or religion with European colleagues, who admired him.

His work counts many volumes devoted to the examination of the essential problems of the theory of knowledge, the justification of faith, the psychological nature of thought, consciousness and emotions. Today, we rediscover some of his thesis on the relations between the brain, emotions and consciousness in scientific fields of research such as the neuroscience. This reveals his importance not only in the philosophical discussions.

In the year 2010, 100 years after the death of the philosopher, scholars and researchers from diverse fields of knowledge gathered in the most important European and American universities together in order to examine and evaluate the intellectual heritage of the Harvard Professor.

For this occasion it is also expectable a great variety of monographic publications in America and Europe. The *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* wants to be an important contributor for this movement and wishes to celebrate William James’s European heritage with the present volume of selected papers by scholars from the United States, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, Portugal and Germany.