

Though we may be grateful to the two thinkers mentioned for introducing these novel phrases with the purpose of giving a new turn to mental philosophy, it will be useful to indicate where the metaphors they have chosen lose their meaning and are apt to mislead us. The "stream or flow of thought," so happily chosen by William James to designate the unceasing change of our inner experiences by comparing it to the flow of a river, does not take note of the fact that in a river the special features such as waves, eddies, and whirls, &c., never recur in the same way, and can therefore not be individually dwelt on. In the stream of our inner experiences, be they thoughts, sensations, or feelings, definite aspects recur ever and again. If it were not so, our experience would be like that of a traveller in a railway train who views the landscape through which he passes only hurriedly, no single aspect recurring in order to receive any fixation or permanence.

Again, if we take James Ward's suggestive statement that we are, when looking introspectively, aware of a continuum of sensations or movements, we must at once add that this continuity exists only during our waking hours, and is then ever and anon broken—though not beyond recovery—by discontinuities in the form of sudden surprises or even of intervals which seem to us void and empty.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding of our conception of the nature of mind, we shall in the sequel make frequent use of a different metaphor and compare the aspect of our inner world with that of the starry heavens if we gaze at them in the night-time. We