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## Chapter 7

William James, was an American psychologist who lived from 1842 to 1910. He vehemently disagreed with Wilhelm Wundt, the German psychologist who taught that consciousness was only a set of elements and simple sensations. Instead, James believed that consciousness is an individual's collective experiences beginning from birth. It involves all a person's interactions and entities they have encountered. James saw consciousness as an uninterrupted current which he referred to as "streams of consciousness" (Schultz 137). He emphatically stated that no human can ever encounter the same exact feeling or notion repeatedly, but with each encounter the impression will be slightly different due to outside influences. James averred that the mind is attentive to only minor bits of information and impulses at any given moment, yet continues to ebb and flow like a river.

The purpose of consciousness, he presumed, was to spurn or choose, to sever or unite occurrences as a means of screening them. In the end, it boils down to what the brain perceives as significant. In this way, a man, woman or child can formulate a string of concepts to process in an analytical manner which leads them to a definitive resolution or judgment. Consciousness equips people to adjust to their surroundings by permitting them to be selective in their preferences. It also allows humans to survive when facing new difficulties.