Dean Hannotte
Suite 200
151 First Avenue
New York, NY 10003

Professor Daniel N. Robinson
Chairman of the Dept. of Psychology
Georgetown University
Washington, DC 20057

Monday, April 2, 1990

Dear Dr. Robinson,

I discovered your magnificent book An Intellectual History of Psychology (and its predecessors) only recently, but was delighted to recognize that you are one of the few modern historians of psychological thought who understands that a true science of human nature--dreamed of by serious men since the Enlightenment--must take roots in insights deeper and broader than can be found in today's Pentagon-funded clinical laboratories and New Age "pop psych" courses. As you said in 1982, "a genuine science of human nature was one of [the important tasks] which the nineteenth century, having made such a good start, thought that we could finish." In the face of the academic cynicism with which you must be all too familiar, it is important that serious men and women believe in the possibility, and indeed the inevitability, of such a great future breakthrough.

For many years I was friend and companion to the late Dr. Paul Rosenfels, who not only shared your interest in this unborn science but gave his life to building an eclectic framework of

insights into human nature which he felt were truly prescient of the science of human nature that will emerge in the coming centuries.

As his work is not yet well known, I am taking the liberty of enclosing two of his books for you. His first, Psychoanalysis and Civilization, despite its awkward title actually undertakes to outline a general science of human nature, or at least the semantic preliminaries to one. I am enclosing his last book partly because it reflects his final views on many subjects and partly because the Introduction I wrote for it details my claims for the historical significance of his work better than this letter can. Also enclosed you will find a bibliography of Paul's writings and a recent issue of the Journal published by the Ninth Street Center, a scientific and educational organization Paul founded in the early 1970's. In the latter, I review Ernest Becker's ideas about why a true science of human nature has thus far failed to appear.

I feel tremendously fortunate to be in touch with your work and hope that you will sense the tremendous historical significance of Paul's ideas despite the unfamiliarity of his name. I will be glad to send you any additional volumes that interest you, and am eager to learn your reactions to what must appear to be an extraordinary claim.

Sincerely,

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Department of Psychology

April 9, 1990

Dean Hannotte
Suite 200
151 First Ave.
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Dear Mr. Hannotte,

Thank you for generously providing me with Dr. Rosenfels' books and bibliography. Time for reading these materials will be made available by the forthcoming leisurely summer months.

Yours Sincerely,

Daniel N. Robinson
Professor and Chairman

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Professor Daniel N. Robinson
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Saturday, September 18, 1993

Dear Dr. Robinson,

With your busy schedule, I'm sure you do not remember me. In April of 1990, I sent you two books by Dr. Paul Rosenfels, a New York psychotherapist, author, and long-standing personal friend who died in 1985 at the age of 76.

I am not academically trained, but have enjoyed a lifelong interest in the history of thought and the development of modern psychology. It has been for many years my impression that the deeply philosophical writings of Dr. Rosenfels represent one of the great advances in our understanding of human nature, and that they in fact constitute the framework of a "science of human nature" (as Paul himself preferred to speak of it). For this reason I regard Paul as the intellectual equal of Copernicus and Darwin, men he especially admired.

When I first encountered your own writings ten years ago I was struck by your scholarly range, logical vigor, and the classical beauty of your writing style. These were not as important to me, however, as was your interest in the Enlightenment's idea of a science of human nature and your recognition of its

pivotal position in the development of human thought, even as a goal not yet achieved.

Having just finished the 1986 edition of An Intellectual History of Psychology for a second time, I feel compelled to ask your professional opinion, so to speak, about this matter. You seem to value the very qualities which Paul's thinking exemplifies, and yet your silence about his work has puzzled me. At the end of your book, for example, your recapitulated admiration for Thomas Reid's philosophy of "common sense" reminded me of Karl Popper's oft-quoted adage that "science is merely common sense writ large." Like Popper, Paul often refused to assume the importance of time-honored questions merely because they were couched in philosophical terms. Popper mocks the presumed necessity of defining terms prior to a discussion, since a reductio ad absurdum ensues. Paul refused often in my presence to define exactly what kind of "science" could address the whole of human nature since, he said, we'll all be perfectly capable of recognizing it once it arrives.[1]

But while intentionally side-stepping many of the philosoph-

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1. Those of us who defend science must not forget how rapidly her nature too has evolved in recent centuries. In a recent interview, Edward Witten said, "Physics [has] progressed in a way which [has] made it possible to be more ambitious about what one regarded as a satisfactory answer to a physical question. It's good to bear in mind that in the nineteenth century physicists didn't even have the aspiration to explain why glass is transparent or why grass is green, why ice melts at the temperature it does, and so on. Those questions were not part of physics in the nineteenth century, and physicists didn't even dream of being able to answer questions like those. They had more modest aspirations. Given certain measurements about how flexible a material was they hoped to be able to calculate the outcomes of certain other experiments, but to predict the whole kitcat and caboodle from basic equations about electrons and nuclei as became possible in the twentieth century, this wasn't even a dream in the nineteenth century." ("Superstrings: A Theory of Everything?" edited by P.C.W. Davies, p.105)

ical conundrums that have tied thinkers in knots for the last thousand years, Paul also expends endless effort detailing the actual features of the subject matter he both witnesses and is himself an instance of. He often takes great trouble to describe features, for example, of our social life which are common knowledge to most of us from childhood. I have sometimes humorously described his writing style as that of a Martian field anthropologist taking great pains to record the odd adaptations of a primitive race on a strange planet in the precise and pure terms of some great psychological science which has for millennia been the common heritage of Martian schoolchildren.

Like yourself, Paul has little interest in Freud and his oxymoronic "unconscious consciousness", the New Age resurrectors of the presumed wisdom of tribal superstition, or the exploiters of popular misconceptions concerning quantum mechanics. (There were exploiters of relativity theory, too, once; today their stories speak volumes about human gullibility.) And Paul too bemoaned that, "recognizing that the creation of a science is difficult and often thankless work, some resign and proceed to traduce the entire effort into a form of game in which one plays a role."

Finally, as you point out on page 179,[2] discourse on human nature has always tended to revolve around the idea of a polarity between two types of men (introvert/extrovert), or two types of outlook on life (apollonian/dionysian), or two categories of being (mind/body). In this respect, Paul's work can be seen as the definitive twentieth-century analysis of the psychological origin, meaning, and implications of this very polarity.

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2. "The history of discourse on the human character may be summarized under two great headings: 'Nature' and 'Spirit.' Beneath the former we find naturalism, Stoicism, materialism, and, ultimately, scientific determinism and logical positivism. Below the latter are the near opposites of these: spiritualism, idealism, transcendentalism, psychological indeterminism, and Romanticism. Every century or so the terms change but the essential positions remain stubbornly constant."

Do you, Dr. Robinson, having spent much of your own life thinking about these matters, imagine that Dr. Rosenfels' work may in fact constitute, point to, or perhaps lay the groundwork for a science of human nature? If not, could you please take a moment of your time and--as if I were one of your younger students--explain to me why Paul's work must be seen by us as a dead-end scientifically? I have spent much of my adult life using, teaching, promoting and writing about Paul's psychological and psychotherapeutic insights, and if I have deluded myself all this time your advice might immeasurably liberate me to learn from other, and perhaps better, thinkers and systems.

Sincerely,

enclosures

1. copy of 1990 letter from Dean Hannotte to Dr. Daniel Robinson.

2. copy of 1990 reply from Dr. Daniel Robinson to Dean Hannotte.

3. Introduction by Dean Hannotte to Paul Rosenfels' Homosexuality: The Psychology of the Creative Process (1971).

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Daniel N. Robinson
Professor of Psychology

September 24, 1993

Dear Mr. Hannotte,

How good of you to take the time (again) to elicit my poor words on this man and this subject of such great importance to you. Well, I actually did find the time, not long after our correspondence, to read -- but not study -- Dr. Rosenfels as his thought is developed in the books you kindly provided. What I am prepared to say briefly, even while fully acknowledging that these books warrant and invite sustained debate and deliberation, is that Dr. Rosenfels was doomed to fail once he reached for a grand, integrating theory of human nature. Failure was inevitable in an age grown suspicious of theory, suspicious of thought itself.

I paused before writing to you, striving to avoid the trite or gratuitous, wondering just how to frame a reply to a question of the sort, "Since so-and-so has so profoundly comprehended the human condition, why are his words neglected?" Alas! Having completed book-length treatment of Aristotle (Aristotle's Psychology, Columbia, 1989), and thus plagued by the same question, I have little to offer beyond sympathetic desperation. What little more I might offer is contained in recent (enclosed) pages of my own as to just why we do not have a Jamesian psychology, notwithstanding the largeness and sincerity of that savant's efforts.

Polarities...Well, life's meaning is constructed out of meaning itself, and meaning itself has this dialectical character. I find merit and requisite subtlety in a thesis that would ground one's sexuality in the discursive realm of families, and in the gendering powers of the discourse. At some point, however, I must add something of a Kantian libretto, for even the choice of meanings is a choice, and a choice in the fuller moral sense. The great

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problem I find in system is the elusive element in fully lived lives. Man, says Schiller, is never so authentically himself as when at play. For my own, I am inclined to regard play as the primordium of the moral self, the first dawnings of which tend to convert play to creativity and thus establish a permanent bond between aesthetics and morality. Homosexuality and heterosexuality, on this score -- sexuality on this score -- must be seen as the quest for a kind of completion, in the way that the creative impulse seeks to be realized in what it completes. That we should love what we would make ourselves into would surprise no classical Greek.

It has been good of you to write to me on these two occasions. I wish I could say something at all worthy of the estimation you've expressed for jottings of mine.

Yours sincerely,

cc: James essay

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Saturday, October 16, 1993

Dear Dr. Robinson,

Thank you for your gracious letter of September 24. After reading your article, Is There a Jamesian Tradition in Psychology?, I have just a few thoughts to offer.

James, as you know, was one of the earlier psychologists to insist on the importance of the polarity between what are today most frequently termed introverts and extroverts. In Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (1907), he discusses the following attributes of tender-minded and tough-minded personalities, attributes which are nearly identical in meaning to similar terms offered years later by Jung under the headings of introvert and extrovert and then by Paul Rosenfels under the headings feminine and masculine:

tender-minded	tough-minded
rationalistic	empiricist
intellectualistic	sensationalistic
idealistic	materialistic
optimistic	pessimistic
religious	irreligious
free-willist	fatalistic
monistic	pluralistic
dogmatical	skeptical

In this limited sense, then, Paul's work certainly followed the "Jamesian tradition." Similarly, like all humanistic psychologists Paul often showed angry contempt for what James knew to be a most pernicious and immoral of fatalisms, "the talk of the contemporary sociological school about averages and general laws and predetermined tendencies, with its obligatory undervaluing of the importance of individual differences."[1]

Paul's work also follows the pragmatic paradigm of science serving human aims and not the other way around. I never knew a human being more concerned about helping others to learn and grow and less easily provoked to empty scholarly debate with colleagues. (Indeed, the only colleagues he suffered were his students, friends and lovers. Although he hoped someday to find a sympathetic ear amongst his fellow professionals, he never did.)

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1. Frank Pierce Jones, on pages 95-96 of his Body Awareness in Action, tells the following sympathetic anecdote about John Dewey:

> Dewey had been reading an article in the "Psychological Review". As I came in he threw it down with an impatient gesture, remarking, "I despair of psychologists. They seem to think that borrowing a technique from another science makes them scientists." He pointed to the cracks in the plastered wall behind me and said, "If I measured each of those cracks, I could calculate their slopes and derive a formula for them. That would not be science, but I could fool a psychologist into thinking it was."

Finally, you note that James, as do all truth-seekers, anticipated an explicator greater than himself when he wrote, "Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes, but ring the fuller minstrel in." Your own article ends with the line "We await the fuller minstrel." By his rich and accurate depiction of the inner dramas and outward panoramas of human existence, by an eclectic unification of culturally diverse and historically distant traditions of insight into the human condition, and by the unprecedented semantic clarity he forged in order to offer these mountains of knowledge within a single psychological language, it is now more apparent to me than ever that Paul Rosenfels was that minstrel, and his song the story of humanity itself.

Sincerely,