Term: Habit
Quote: …I should think that the performance of a certain line of behavior, throughout an endless succession of occasions, without exception, very decidedly constituted a habit. There may be some doubt about this, for owing to our not being accustomed to reason in this way about successions of events which are endless in the sequence and yet are completed in time, it is hard for me quite to satisfy myself what I ought to say in such a case. But I have reflected seriously on it, and though I am not perfectly sure of my ground (and I am a cautious reasoner), yet I am more that what you would understand by “pretty confident,” that supposing one to be in a condition to assert what would surely be the behavior, in any single determinate respect, of any subject throughout an endless series of occasions of a stated kind, he ipso facto knows a “would-be,” or habit, of that subject. It is very true, mind you, that no collection whatever of single acts, though it were ever so many grades greater than a simple endless series, can constitute a would-be, nor can the knowledge of single acts, whatever their multitude, tell us for sure of a would-be.