

# RELATED SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS ON JAMES

April - November 2017



In recognition of the fact that James scholars are publishing articles in other academic journals, the editors feel that it is important to keep our readers informed of the diversity within Jamesian scholarship by drawing attention to relevant publications outside of *WJS*. The Periodicals section of the journal aims to provide our readers with information about related scholarly articles that address the life, work, and influence of James's thought. If you have recently published a peer-reviewed article on James or have noticed an omission from this list, please contact our Periodicals Editor, Kyle Bromhall, at [periodicals@williamjamesstudies.org](mailto:periodicals@williamjamesstudies.org) and we will include it at the next opportunity.



Breslauer, Samuel. "The morality of faith in Martin Buber and William James." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 82, no. 2 (2017): 153-74.

Some philosophers have become atheists because of "intellectual probity." Martin Buber relates two occasions during which he advocated his view of the term "God" and rejected alternative perspectives. He never justified the basis for either his advocacy or his rejection, yet both play an important role in all his writing, especially his specific type of Zionism. Using what has been called the mere theism of William James' "The Will to Believe" and the criteria for faith that James advances in that essay illuminates both Buber's general view of the divine and more particularly his Zionism. Once Buber, no less than James, is understood as a mere theist the basis of what he accepts and what he rejects as true religion becomes clearer. Buber's theism meets James' requirement of being a live, forced, momentous option and his Zionism also strives to meet those standards.

de Freitas Araujo, Saulo. "Psychology between science and common sense: William James and the problems of psychological language in the *Principles*." *New Ideas in Psychology* 46 (Aug 2017): 39-45.

The suspicion that language can become an obstacle to human knowledge is not new in the Western intellectual tradition. Following the empiricist legacy, many authors have suggested the perils and pitfalls of common sense language for science. Applied to psychology, this leads to the issue of the reliability of psychological language for scientific psychology. William James, in his *Principles of Psychology*, was one of the first psychologists to address this problem explicitly. The goal of this paper is to situate his position and contrast it with contemporary debates over the status of folk psychology. The results indicate that James conceived of common sense psychology in a very complex manner, and pointed to a kind of illusion that remains

ignored in the current literature, with negative consequences for psychology. I conclude by suggesting the relevance of James for contemporary debates in theoretical and philosophical psychology.

*Erchinger, Philipp. "Reading Experience: William James and Robert Browning." Journal of Literary Theory 11, no. 2 (August 2017): 162-82.*

The topic of this essay is the concept of experience which, in the field of literary studies, is often used as if it were divided into an objective and a subjective aspect. Advocates of so-called ›empirical‹ approaches to the study of texts and minds tend to proceed from experience only to abstract impersonal (or objective) ›data‹ from it. By contrast, phenomenological and hermeneutic methods are frequently said to work through more immediately personal (or subjective) responses to, and engagements with, literary works. Thus experience, it seems, must either be read in terms of statistical diagrams and brain images, or else remain caught up in an activity of reading that, being characterised as singular and eventful, is believed to resist most attempts to convert it into such allegedly objective forms.

Drawing on the radical empiricism of William James, this essay seeks to reintegrate the experience of reading and the reading of experience, both of which are ambiguously condensed in my title. The main argument of the piece therefore hinges on James's and John Dewey's claim that experience is ›double-barrelled‹ (James 1977, 172), which is to say that it refers to ›the entire process of phenomena‹, to quote James's own definition, ›before reflective thought has analysed them into subjective and objective aspects or ingredients‹ (James 1978, 95). Made up of both perceptions and conceptions, experience, as James views it, is the medium through which everything must have passed before it can be named, and without (or outside of) which nothing, therefore, can be said to exist. With this radical account of

empiricism in mind, I revisit some of the assumptions underpinning cognitive literary criticism, before turning to an interpretation of the dramatic poetry of Robert Browning, which has been described as a version of »empiricism in literature« because it is concerned with »the pursuit of experience in all its remotest extensions« (Langbaum 1963, 96).

More specifically, my article engages with »Fra Lippo Lippi« and »An Epistle Containing the Strange Medical Experience of Karshish, the Arab Physician« in order to show that Browning's dramatic monologues make experience legible as an activity by means of which perceptions come to be turned into conceptions while conceptions, conversely, are continuously reaffirmed, altered, or enriched by whatever perceptions are added to them as life goes on. As I argue, Browning's personae speak from the inside of an experience in the making, rather than about a series of events that has already been brought to an end. Readers of these poems are therefore invited to read along with, as well as to reflect upon, the creative activity through which characters and circumstances come into existence and through which they are sustained and transformed. It follows that Browning's writings offer their readers nothing to be processed from a mental vantage point above, or outside of, them. Instead, they involve the act of reading in the generative action through which experience comes to be made into meaningful text. Ultimately, the purpose of this essay is not only to indicate commonalities between James's radical empiricism and Browning's dramatic poetry. More importantly, I wish, by way of this endeavour, also to propose a process- or performance-based corrective, inspired by James and Dewey as much as by contemporary scholars (Ingold, Massumi), to what I regard as a rationalist or intellectualist bias in some representative work in the field of cognitive literary studies (Turner, Zunshine).

*Fischer, Clara. "Feminist Philosophy, Pragmatism, and the Turn to Affect: A Genealogical Critique." Hypatia, 31 (4):810-826.*

Recent years have witnessed a focus on feeling as a topic of reinvigorated scholarly concern, described by theorists in a range of disciplines in terms of a "turn to affect." Surprisingly little has been said about this most recent shift in critical theorizing by philosophers, including feminist philosophers, despite the fact that affect theorists situate their work within feminist and related, sometimes intersectional, political projects. In this article, I redress the seeming elision of the "turn to affect" in feminist philosophy, and develop a critique of some of the claims made by affect theorists that builds upon concerns regarding the "newness" of affect and emotion in feminist theory, and the risks of erasure this may entail. To support these concerns, I present a brief genealogy of feminist philosophical work on affect and emotion. Identifying a reductive tendency within affect theory to equate affect with bodily immanence, and to preclude cognition, culture, and representation, I argue that contemporary feminist theorists would do well to follow the more holistic models espoused by the canon of feminist work on emotion. Furthermore, I propose that prominent affect theorist Brian Massumi is right to return to pragmatism as a means of redressing philosophical dualisms, such as emotion/cognition and mind/body, but suggest that such a project is better served by John Dewey's philosophy of emotion than by William James's.

*Friesen, Lowell, and James Cresswell, "Rethinking priming in social psychology: Insight from James' notions of habits and instincts." New Ideas in Psychology 46 (Aug 2017): 17-25.*

Research on priming is commonly taken to establish that much of human behavior is automatic and caused by largely subconscious processes. This research has recently come under increased scrutiny as some classic studies have proved

difficult to replicate. In this essay, we bring the views of William James to bear on priming. Though James leaves room for instinct and habit, he rejects the view that human psychology is ultimately mechanistic on the grounds that it is naïvely simplistic. James is also able to explain why priming studies are bound to face replicability issues: human behavior unfolds in a dynamic multifarious constellation of interrelationships among people, consciousness, and the world. To offer researchers a productive direction for studying cognition, we conclude by briefly introducing an approach known as enactivism – an approach that resonates with the ideas James puts forth.

*Haye, Andrés, and Manuel Torres-Sahli. "To feel is to know relations: James' concept of stream of thought and contemporary studies on procedural knowledge." New Ideas in Psychology 46 (Aug 2017): 46-55.*

The theory of William James concerning the temporal and dynamic nature of mind is analyzed as implying that thought is a flow of subjective experience that belongs to the material flow of living beings, and therefore, that knowledge is primarily affective and practical rather than declarative and contemplative. In this context, we will discuss contemporary theory and research relevant to the discussion about declarative and procedural knowledge, with the focus on a literature review in the neurosciences of knowledge. Then we reconstruct James' theory of mind as flow, in terms of relatedness, feeling, and temporality of experience. The Principles suggest that declarative knowledge is not independent, but derived and supported by a more basic knowledge that is both procedural and affective in nature. Finally, we discuss possible lesson for nowadays efforts to develop a dynamic account of the procedural nature of knowledge.

Kay, William K. "William James: a re-examination of The Varieties of Religious Experience." *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 20:4 (Apr 2017): 299-310.

The centenary edition of William James' classic account of religious experience, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, was first published by Routledge in 2002 with a new forward as well as the preface of the original 1902 edition. This paper reviews aspects of James' work and briefly considers its later development.

Koopman, Colin. "The Will, the Will to Believe, and William James: An Ethics of Freedom as Self-Transformation." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 55, no. 3 (July 2017): 491-512.

William James's doctrine of the will to believe is one of the most infamous arguments in modern philosophy. Critics frequently interpret it as a feeble defense of wishful thinking. Such criticisms rely on treating James's ethics of belief independently from his moral psychology. Unfortunately, this separation is also implicitly assumed by many of his defenders. James's *ethics* of willing, I here show, relies on his robust *psychology* of the will. In his 1896 essay, "The Will to Believe," James carefully circumscribes those situations in which willful belief is defensible in a way that closely matches his description of decision by effort in the "Will" chapter of his 1890 *The Principles of Psychology*. Explicating this match helps show why the will to believe is not a defense of wishful thinking, but rather a naturalistic account of the value of sculpting our habits, or of what I describe as Jamesian self-transformation.

Lacasse, Katherine. "Going with your gut: How William James' theory of emotions brings insights to risk perception and decision making research." *New Ideas in Psychology* 46 (Aug 2017): 1-7.

The basic premise of William James' theory of emotions – that bodily changes lead to emotional feelings – ignited

debate about the relative importance of bodily processes and cognitive appraisals in determining emotions. Similarly, theories of risk perception have been expanding to include emotional and physiological processes along with cognitive processes. Taking a closer look at *The Principles of Psychology*, this article examines how James' propositions support and extend current research on risk perception and decision making. Specifically, James (1) described emotional feelings and their related cognitions in ways similar to current dual processing models; (2) defended the proposition that emotions and their expressions serve useful and adaptive functions; (3) suggested that anticipating an emotion can trigger that emotion due to associations learned from past experiences; and (4) highlighted individual differences in emotional experiences that map on well with individual differences in risk-related decision making.

*Robertson, Ritchie. "Everyday transcendence? Robert Musil, William James, and mysticism." History of European Ideas 43, no. 3 (Aug. 2017): 262-72.*

In the early twentieth century, as a reaction against scientific positivism, a widespread interest in mysticism developed, especially among German writers. Mystical experience in the form of 'epiphanies' was described by the psychologist William James and explored by the novelist Robert Musil. In his novel *The Man without Qualities*, Musil proposes an approach to mysticism which captures the phenomenology of the experience and makes it available for scientific study without subjecting it to a religious, or any other, interpretation.

*Shaw, Jane. "Varieties of mystical experience in William James and other moderns." History of European Ideas 43, no. 3 (Aug. 2017): 226-40.*

In 1902, William James gave his Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh, entitled *The Varieties of Religious Experience*,



in which he claimed that such experience was a part of human nature, and was necessarily the foundation of all institutional religion. His work has often been singled out as leading to an increasingly private and individualistic understanding of religion, but this paper places his work in a broader movement of the early twentieth century that heralded a revival of interest in religious experience and, especially, mysticism. It explores the work of two English writers, W.R. Inge and Evelyn Underhill, in relation to James, and argues that the revival of interest in mysticism was a significant response to the intellectual challenges to faith in modernity.

*Sullivan, Paul. "Towards a literary account of mental health from James' Principles of Psychology." New Ideas in Psychology 46 (Aug 2017): 31-38.*

The field of mental health tends to treat its literary metaphors as literal realities with the concomitant loss of vague "feelings of tendency" in "unusual experiences". I develop this argument through the prism of William James' (1890) "The Principles of Psychology". In the first part of the paper, I reflect upon the relevance of James' "The Psychologist's Fallacy" to a literary account of mental health. In the second part of the paper, I develop the argument that "connotations" and "feelings of tendency" are central to resolving some of the more difficult challenges of this fallacy. I proceed to do this in James' spirit of generating imaginative metaphors to understand experience. Curiously, however, mental health presents a strange paradox in William James' (1890) *Principles of Psychology*. He constructs an elaborate conception of the "empirical self" and "stream of thought" but chooses not to use these to understand unusual experiences – largely relying instead on the concept of a "secondary self." In this article, I attempt to make more use of James' central division between the "stream of thought" and the "empirical self" to understand unusual experiences.

I suggest that they can be usefully understood using the loose metaphor of a “binary star” where the “secondary self” can be seen as an “accretion disk” around one of the stars. Understood as literary rather than the literal, this metaphor is quite different to more unitary models of self-breakdown in mental health, particularly in its separation of “self” from “the stream of thought” and I suggest it has the potential to start a re-imagining of the academic discourse around mental health.

*Thayer-Bacon, Barbara J. “Exploring William James’s Radical Empiricism and Relational Ontologies for Alternative Possibilities in Education.” Studies in Philosophy and Education 36, no. 3: 299-314.*

In *A Pluralistic Universe*, James argues that the world we experience is more than we can describe. Our theories are incomplete, open, and imperfect. Concepts function to try to shape, organize, and describe this open, flowing universe, while the universe continually escapes beyond our artificial boundaries. For James and myself, the universe is unfinished, a “primal stuff” or “pure experience.” However, James starts with parts and moves to wholes, and I want to start from wholes and move to parts and back to wholes again. This is an issue between us I further consider, for while he describes himself as a *radical empiricist*, emphasizing the parts, my descriptions are in terms of w/holism. I use this opportunity to explore James’s contributions to my metaphor of “pure experience” as being like an infinite Ocean and the fishing nets we create represent our ontologies and epistemologies that help us catch up our experiences and give them meaning. I also make the case for why a better understanding of ontology matters for us as educators, using Maria Montessori’s curriculum and instruction design, Dinè Primary School, and Cajete’s theology of place and culturally based science as

examples of relational fishing nets we could be using to teach our children.

*Valsiner, Jaan. "Beyond the three snares: Implications of James' 'psychologist's fallacy' for 21st century science." New Ideas in Psychology 46 (Aug 2017): 26-30.*

William James in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890, pp. 194–197) warned psychologists against their own habits of assuming that other human beings are like they are. He outlined “three snares” which he considered as obstacles for psychology becoming a science: 1. The misleading influence of language, 2. The confusion of one’s own standpoint with that of mental fact, and 3. The assumption of conscious reflection in the participant as that is the case for the researcher. His challenges remain valid to the discipline also in our 21st century, yet an unsolved problem remains: development of formal theoretical systems that generalize from the “pure experience” of living in irreversible time to basic principles of meaning-making. By pointing to the three snares 125 years ago, William James himself created a new one—that of pragmatism.

*Williams, Neil W. "Kidnapping an ugly child: is William James a pragmatist?." British Journal for the History of Philosophy (2017): 1-22.*

Since the term ‘pragmatism’ was first coined, there have been debates about who is or is not a ‘real’ pragmatist, and what that might mean. The division most often drawn in contemporary pragmatist scholarship is between William James and Charles Peirce. Peirce is said to present a version of pragmatism which is scientific, logical and objective about truth, whereas James presents a version which is nominalistic, subjectivistic and leads to relativism. The first person to set out this division was in fact Peirce himself, when he distinguished his own ‘pragmaticism’ from the broad pragmatism of James and others. Peirce sets out six

criteria which defines ‘pragmaticism’: the pragmatic maxim; a number of ‘preliminary propositions’; prope-positivism; metaphysical inquiry; critical common-sensism; and scholastic realism. This paper sets out to argue that in fact James meets each of these criteria, and should be seen as a ‘pragmaticist’ by Peirce’s own lights.

*Zhao, Shanyang. “Self as a second-order object: Reinterpreting the Jamesian ‘Me.’” New Ideas in Psychology 46 (Aug 2017): 8-16.*

Existing definitions of the self can be lumped into three groups: self as self-reflectivity, self as self-concept, and self as the individual. This article traces current disagreements over the definition of the self to a crucial ambiguity in William James’s original delineation of the “Me.” Implicit in James’s delineation was a distinction between first-order objects and second-order objects: while first-order objects are things as they are, independent of the perception of a knowing subject, second-order objects are things as perceived by a knowing subject. This article makes this distinction explicit and argues that the self is a second-order object associated with the first-person or “emic” perspective. Defined as the empirical existence of the individual (first order) perceived by the individual as “me” or “mine” (second order), the self is distinguished from the “I” which is the mental capacity for self-reflection; the self-concept which is the mental representation of the individual’s existence; and the individual which is the empirical referent of the self-concept. As a second-order object, the “Me,” i.e., the self, is the unity of the existence and perception of the individual.