

RELATED SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS ON JAMES

November 2019 – September 2020



In recognition of the fact that James scholars are publishing articles in other academic journals, the editors believe that it is important to keep our readers informed of the diversity within James scholarship by drawing attention to relevant publications outside of *WJS*. This section of the journal aims to provide 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, James Medd, at periodicals@williamjamesstudies.org and we will include it at the next opportunity.



Bella, Michela. “Novelty and Causality in William James’s Pluralistic Universe.” *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* 11, no. 2 (2019): 1-25.

<https://doi.org/10.4000/eipap.1668>

The issue of the emergence of genuinely new events in a paradigm of natural continuity has been analyzed in different fields by Pragmatists authors like Peirce, Dewey, and Mead. Another way to consider the problematic relationship between novelty and continuity is by considering William James’s understanding of causal connections. This article addresses the concept of causality that James repeatedly addressed and deeply rethought throughout his career. I believe that the concept of causality provides an excellent platform from which to view the various aspects that have made James’s epistemological and metaphysical thinking so influential in the history of theories of emergence, and which is experiencing currently a major revival.

Boxill, Bernard R. “W.E.B. DuBois and William James on Double Consciousness.” *Journal of Social Philosophy* (Spring 2020): 1-17.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/josp.12329>

[No abstract available]

Capps, John. “William James and the Will to Believe.” *Contemporary Pragmatism* 17, no. 1 (2020): 1-20.

<https://doi.org/10.1163/18758185-01701002>

William James’ “The Will to Believe” (1896/1979) continues to attract scholarly attention. This might seem surprising since James’ central claim – that one may justifiably believe *p* despite having inconclusive evidence for *p* – seems both very clear and also very wrong. I argue

that many of the interpretive and substantive challenges of this essay can be overcome by framing James' thesis in terms of what Tamar Gendler defines as "alief." I consider two readings of James' position (one charitable, the other super-charitable) and conclude that the "will to believe" rests on a misnomer. "The Will to Alieve" is more accurate – though the "Right to Alieve" is even better still.

Chengbing, Wang. "Possible Approaches to the Comparative Study of William James and Traditional Chinese Philosophy." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* (2020): 1-3.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1750088>

[No abstract available]

Colella, E. Paul. "I suppose I ought to say something about the war": William James, Pragmatism and the War with Spain, 1898." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 56, no. 1 (Winter 2020): 81-104.
<https://doi.org/10.2979/trancharpeirsoc.56.1.05>

Students of William James typically regard "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results" as the place where he introduces pragmatism to the intellectual world as a uniquely American approach to philosophy. There, James describes the lineage of pragmatism with its origins in the work of Peirce and provides his own variant on the original. James next proceeds to illustrate the method by applying it to traditional metaphysical problems. The current paper explores an additional reading of James's address, one that places it within the context of the contemporary national debate surrounding the 1898 War with Spain and its emergent imperialist aftermath. This paper examines how the philosophical advantages that James claims for the pragmatic method when directed to the technical problems of philosophy can be read as

addressing issues surrounding that war and the public debate that it aroused. In “Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results” pragmatism emerges not only as a point of view for professional philosophers in their struggle with perennial technical problems of metaphysics, but also as a powerful tool for addressing the timely matters of national policy surrounding America’s imperialist adventure within the wider, non-technical public sphere of practical life.

Dastmard, Marziyeh and Abbas Izadpanah. “The Relationship of Religion and Spirituality in the School of Thought of William James.” *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 6, no. 6 (2020): 730-38.

<https://doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v6i6.1196>

Psychology of religion, an interdisciplinary field between psychology and religion, is a new knowledge that describes psychological experiences, attitudes and behaviors. This knowledge began in the late nineteenth century and was consolidated in three British, American, German and French traditions. The American tradition of experientialism, using specimens and case studies and statistical descriptions, is the intellectual philosopher and functional psychologist and nominee pragmatist William James, who empirically examines the psychological analysis of religious affairs. He who believes in the ultimate assessment of thought or experience by examining the result and the rate of profitability in life relies on two criteria of compatibility with the correct assumptions and beliefs as well as intuition and introverting as the main and most reliable research tool. James seeks to study religion over the life of man, his actions and experiences, and for this purpose uses the term religious experience. William James also believes that emotions are the most stable and fundamental elements, and religion is essentially a matter

of feeling. In his view, religious experience is an experience that the subject understands religiously. In this sense, the religion of feelings, actions, and experiences of individuals in their loneliness is against whatever they consider sacred. In order to understand more about James's views on religion, this article seeks to study the relationship between religion and psychology. William James is an intellectual think tank.

de Freitas Araujo, Saulo. "Truth, Half-Truth, and Post-Truth: Lessons from William James." *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* (2020): 1-13.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10720537.2020.1727390>

According to many authors, we live in a post-truth era, to the extent that truth has become subordinated to politics. This has implications not only to political debates, but also to science, technology, and common-sense thinking. In this paper, I claim that William James's conception of truth may shed new light on the contemporary post-truth debate. First, I will present the essential elements of James's initial position. Then, I will discuss some of his amendments to clarify and improve his theory to avoid misunderstandings. Finally, I will address his potential contributions to the contemporary post-truth debate, and consider whether there are special implications for psychology.

Dunham, Jeremy. "On the Experience of Activity: William James's Late Metaphysics and the Influence of Nineteenth-Century French Spiritualism." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 58, no. 2 (April 2020): 267-91.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.2020.0039>

Is there a particular experience-type associated with the exercise of agency? This question was subject to lively philosophical debate in nineteenth-century France.

William James paid close attention to these debates, and for most of his academic life argued that the answer was “no.” However, in this article, I show that a few years before the end of his life, under the influence of the French spiritualist tradition, he changed his mind. I argue that this change led to a global shift in his philosophical thinking. One major consequence of this is that he modified his philosophy so that it allowed a greater role for “objective” reality, and was consequently at less risk of the charge of “solipsism” directed at him by his critics. After this shift, James’s philosophy could stand on much firmer ground.

Goldman, Loren. “William James, Energy, and the Pluralist Ethic of Receptivity.” *Theory & Event* 23, no. 3 (July 2020): 706-33.

<https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/760418>.

[No abstract available]

Guilmette, Lauren. “Teresa Brennan, William James, and the Energetic Demands of Ethics.” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 33, no. 4 (2020): 590-609.

<https://doi.org/10.5325/jspecphil.33.4.0590>

This article engages the late feminist philosopher Teresa Brennan in conversation with William James on “energetics” and “living attention.” Brennan should be prominent in what has been called the “affective turn”; yet, due to her untimely death, she remains peripheral. Against this trend, Shannon Sullivan (2015) recently appealed to Brennan to supplement James on emotion, recalibrating his sense of energetic relationality at times obscured by Victorian individualistic tropes. I extend Sullivan’s claim to consider how Brennan builds upon a Jamesian discourse of “energy” to describe the concrete possibilities of – and structural obstacles to – solidarity, with concern for the

circulation of affects that energize some and drain others. While Brennan rarely references James, her papers in Brown's Feminist Theory Archive show that she read him actively in her last years, planning to write her next book on "consciousness." It is less surprising, then, that Brennan's theories would resonate with Jamesian ideas, and I develop this resonance in Brennan's published work.

Hackett, J. Edward. "Engaging in an Accurate Assessment of Pluralism in William James." *Contemporary Pragmatism* 17, no. 1 (2020): 85-99.

<https://doi.org/10.1163/18758185-01701006>

In this essay, I will respond to the several charges laid at my feet by Robert Talisse and Scott Aikin engaged in their response entitled "Pragmatism and 'Existential' Pluralism: A Response to Hackett" (2018) about my article that also appeared in *Contemporary Pragmatism* entitled "Why James Can Be an Existential Pluralist" (2017). At the heart of my response lies a concern with what I call the principle of hermeneutic charity and the final view James offers us of his entire philosophy. One can recognize the need for historical accuracy and the need to investigate first-order claims that come from historically accurate interpretations.

Klein, Alexander. "The Death of Consciousness? James's Case against Psychological Unobservables." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 58, no. 2 (April 2020): 293-323.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.2020.0040>

Received wisdom has it that psychologists and philosophers came to mistrust consciousness for largely behaviorist reasons. But by the time John Watson had published his behaviorist manifesto in 1913, a wider revolt against consciousness was already underway. I focus on William James, an earlier influential source of unease

about consciousness. James's mistrust of consciousness grew out of his critique of perceptual elementarism in psychology. This is the view that most mental states are complex, and that psychology's goal is in some sense to analyze these states into their atomic "elements." Just as we cannot (according to James) isolate any atomic, sensory elements in our occurrent mental states, so we cannot distinguish any elemental consciousness from any separate contents. His critique of elementarism depended on an argument against appeals in psychology to unconscious mentality – to unobservables. Perhaps this is ironic, but his thought is that pure consciousness is itself just as invisible to introspection as isolated, simple ideas.

Klein, Alexander. "William James's Objection to Epiphenomenalism." *Philosophy of Science* 86, no. 5 (2019): 1179-90.

<https://doi.org/10.1086/705477>

James developed an evolutionary objection to epiphenomenalism that is still discussed today. Epiphenomenalists have offered responses that do not grasp its full depth. I thus offer a new reading and assessment of James's objection. Our life-essential, phenomenal pleasures and pains have three features that suggest that they were shaped by selection, according to James: they are natively patterned, those patterns are systematically linked with antecedent brain states, and the patterns are "universal" among humans. If epiphenomenalism were true, phenomenal patterns could not have been selected (because epiphenomenalism precludes phenomenal consciousness affecting reproductive success). So epiphenomenalism is likely false.

Kim, Chae Young. "A Sketch on Daisaku Ikeda as a Jamesian Psychologist of Religion." *Religions* 10, no. 11 (2019): 607-18.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10110607>

This essay attempts to determine whether Daisaku Ikeda can be seen as a Jamesian psychologist of religion. Concerning the development of this essay, it first focuses on a common concern that exists if we look at the work of William James and the Psychology of Religion in terms of how it exists as a distinct movement and how it is related to Ikeda's perception of religion within a secular world. Next, this essay articulates his notion of self and the role of mediating symbols as this exists, especially in religion, in discourse, and in the arts in correspondence and relation to James' Psychology of Religion. Finally, this essay critically raises questions that point to further developments as regards the thesis of this article.

LaMothe, Ryan. "Writing towards Death: William James and Sigmund Freud and Sustaining Objects/Practices." *Pastoral Psychology* 68, no. 6 (2019): 651-65.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-019-00872-7>

This article addresses how the practice of writing for William James and Sigmund Freud served as a sustaining object/practice and a testament of faith when they faced illness and death. More particularly, their practice of writing reveals not only their attitudes and beliefs about death and life but also the core ideas in which they put their trust and their fidelity.

Mollard, Romain. “Entropy, Eternity, and Unheimlichkeit in William James’s Philosophy.” *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 41, no. 1 (January 2020): 32-52.

<https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/761310>

[No abstract available]

Oya, Alberto. “Unamuno and James on Religious Faith.” *Teorema: International Journal of Philosophy* 39, no. 1 (2020): 85-104.

<https://philpapers.org/rec/OYAUAJ>

The aim of this paper is to argue against the received view among Unamuno scholars that Miguel de Unamuno was defending a sort of pragmatic argument for religious faith and that his notion of religious faith as “querer creer” (“wanting to believe”) is to be identified with William James’s “the will to believe”. As I will show in this paper, one of the aspects that makes Unamuno’s reasoning philosophically relevant is his ability to formulate a non-pragmatist defense of religious faith without a prior commitment to the truth of any religious or theological statement and grounded in our longing for an endless existence through God’s Salvation.

Petrie, Paul R. “W. D. Howells, William James, and the Pragmatist Pluralism of “The Angel of the Lord”.” *American Literary Realism* 52, no. 3 (Spring 2020): 211-33.

<https://doi.org/10.5406/amerlitreal.52.3.0211>

[No abstract available]

**Riedenauer, Markus. "Am Ende der Modernen Sicherheit: William James über Religiöse Erfahrung." [At the End of Modern Security: William James on Religious Experience]. *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society* 5, no. 1 (2019): 52-75.
<https://doi.org/10.30965/23642807-00501004>**

William James defends religious belief as a reasonable option against a kind of widespread agnosticism which he calls scientific absolutism, and against the dogmatism which he sees in the natural theology of his time. On the basis of his collection of essays *The Will to Believe*, the article reconstructs his arguments and the epistemological foundation of his famous treatment of religious experience in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. James' pragmatistic approach, which he calls radical empiricism, resists the exclusion of "mystical" experiences of conversion and redemption, and of religious faith from the realm of reasonable attitudes. Experiences of the astonishing gift of being, of trust and openness, courage and motivation to endure life's evils can validate religious faith. In so far as modern rationality with its highest expression in the sciences is rooted in an existential quest for security, the underlying attitude towards life unnecessarily prevents personal experiences of the divine and salvation and unreasonably devaluates attitudes of faith. James defends the desiring nature of human beings and opens up the space for legitimate religious experience.

**Rodgers, Jordan. "A Modern Polytheism? Nietzsche and James." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 34, no. 1 (2020): 69-96.
<https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/753447>.**

Richard Rorty has argued that Friedrich Nietzsche and William James are both polytheists in the deflationary

sense that they are both pluralists about human value. I argue that there is a more philosophically significant sense in which Nietzsche and James might be called polytheists: both advocate a life of openness and receptivity to multiple and potentially incommensurable sources of inspiration outside of our conscious control. The value of these sources is accessed in experiences in which one feels that one is given something in an experience that one could not have obtained through conscious effort. I argue that this moment of passivity plays a crucial role in both James's treatment of religious experience in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and Nietzsche's account of the state of inspiration he experienced while composing *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and that their deep similarity on this point suggests that Nietzsche is closer to Jamesian religion than he is to Rortyan secularism.

Shardlow, Jack. "A Tale of Two Williams: James, Stern, and the Specious Present." *Philosophical Explorations* 23, no. 2 (2020): 79-94.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13869795.2020.1753803>.

As a typical subject, you experience a variety of paradigmatically temporal phenomena. Looking out of the window in the English summer, you can see leaves swaying in the breeze and hear the pitter-patter of raindrops steadily increasing against the window. In discussions of temporal experience, and through reflecting on examples such as those offered, two phenomenological claims are widely - though not unequivocally - accepted: firstly, you perceptually experience motion and change; secondly, while more than a momentary state of affairs is presented in your ongoing perceptual experience, that which is presented nonetheless seems to be of a quite limited temporal extent. These two claims are frequently tied to the notion of the specious present. However, there

has recently been a push back against the supposed link between perceived motion and the specious present. I argue that there are two ways of understanding this link, and while one has recently been the target of criticism, the other withstands such criticism. My overarching aim is to clarify the notion of the specious present through a discussion of the notion's origins, in addition to recent criticism directed at the notion, with the hope of reframing how contemporary debates proceed.

Sheehy, Bonnie. "Methodologies of Travel: William James and the Ambulatory Pragmatism of Bruno Latour." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 33, no. 4 (2020): 571-89.
<https://doi.org/10.5325/jspecphil.33.4.0571>

This article argues for the methodological resonance shared by Bruno Latour and William James in order to understand Latour's affiliation with pragmatism. Unlike many readers of Latour, I suggest that his relation with pragmatism is primarily methodological rather than primarily ontological. To clarify this, I look to the resonances between James's methodological pragmatism and Latour's actor-network methodology. Latour's pragmatism resonates with James's as it incorporates a methodological focus on practices and objects, and as it furthers underdeveloped themes of motion in James's pragmatism. This methodological alliance, I argue, consists in a modification of the metaphoric of method from one of Cartesian construction to one of movement and travel.

Sheehy, Bonnie. “To Bear the Past as a Living Wound: William James and the Philosophy of History.” *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 13, no. 3 (2019): 325-42.
<https://doi.org/10.1163/18722636-12341431>

Philosophers generally recognize pragmatism as a philosophy of progress. For many commentators, pragmatism is linked to a notion of historical progress through its embrace of meliorism – a forward-looking philosophy that places hope in the future possibility of improvement. This paper calls pragmatism’s progressivism into question by outlining an alternative account of meliorism in the work of William James. Drawing on his ethical writings from the 1870s and 1880s, I argue that James’s concept of hope does not imply an embrace of historical progress, but remains detached from such a notion precisely insofar as it relies on a non-progressive temporality that encourages a rethinking of historical change. This form of hope is significant, I suggest, for the work of conceptualizing a non-progressive pragmatist approach to history and historiography.

Stepanenko, Walter Scott. “A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking: Pragmatism, Radical Empiricism, and Epistemology in W.E.B. Du Bois’s “Of the Sorrow Songs”.” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 87, no. 2 (April 2020): 173-92.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11153-019-09717-y>

When William James published *Pragmatism*, he gave it a subtitle: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking. In this article, I argue that pragmatism is an epistemological method for articulating success in, and between, a plurality of practices, and that this articulation helped James develop radical empiricism. I contend that this pluralistic philosophical methodology is evident in James’s approach to philosophy of religion, and that this method is also

exemplified in the work of one of James's most famous students, W.E.B. Du Bois, specifically in the closing chapter of *The Souls of Black Folk*, "Of the Sorrow Songs." I argue that "Sorrow Songs" can be read as an epistemological text, and that once one identifies the epistemic standards of pragmatism and radical empiricism in the text, it's possible to identify an implicit case for moderate fideism in "Sorrow Songs." I contend that this case illuminates the pluralistic philosophical methodology James worked throughout his career to develop, and that the James-Du Bois approach to philosophy may even help locate the epistemic value of other religious practices, beyond the singing of hymns, and identify terrain mainstream philosophy has long neglected.

Stepanenko, Walter Scott. "The Fruits of the Unseen: A Jamesian Challenge to Explanatory Reductionism in Accounts of Religious Experience." *Open Theology* 6, no. 1 (2020): 54-65. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2020-0007>

In *Religious Experience*, Wayne Proudfoot argued that a tout court rejection of reductionism in accounts of religious experience was not viable. According to Proudfoot, it's possible to distinguish between an illegitimate practice of descriptive reductionism and the legitimate practice of explanatory reductionism. The failure to distinguish between these two forms of reductionism resulted in a protective strategy, or an attempt to protect religious experience from the reach of scientific explanation. Among the theorists whom he accused of deploying this illegitimate strategy Proudfoot included William James and his work in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. In this article, I argue that while James does occasionally deploy a protective strategy in *Varieties*, this is not the only nor most important method of treating religious experience James developed. Implicit in his rejection of medical

materialism, James not only deploys the protective strategy Proudfoot criticizes, but the pragmatic method with which he treats all claims. I argue that James's pragmatic method leads to what James called noetic pluralism, or the view that there is no privileged knowledge practice, but a plurality of knowledge practices, and that this method puts pressure on the explanatory reductionist, who is implicitly committed to noetic monism.