

RELATED SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS ON JAMES

October 2020 – May 2021



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.



Algaier, Ermine L. “Correcting Perry’s Misleading Narrative: Historicizing James’s ‘Shady Excursions’ into Phrenology.” *The Pluralist* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 17-24.

<https://doi.org/10.5406/pluralist.15.1.0017>

While William James’s research in mental healing, psychical research, and religious experience are all well documented, his encounters with phrenology is less closely examined. The leading narrative derives from Ralph Barton Perry’s depiction of James as a believer in the truth of phrenology and also portrays him as being sympathetic to it as an art of character study. Textual evidence suggests that not only does Perry’s account originate from undocumented and shaky oral history, but also that his supporting evidence derives from a misreading of Thomas A. Hyde’s *How to Study Character*. As a corrective, I historically and thematically reconstruct James’s interest in phrenology as being scientific in nature, specifically focusing on how his interest in phrenology belongs to the problem of cerebral localization.

Benevides, Rodrigo Barbosa Gomes. “Consciências Saudáveis e Almas Enfermas: Posturas Éticas Religiosas em William James.” [Healthy Consciences and Sick Souls: Religious Ethical Postures in William James]. *Estudos de Religião* 34, no. 3 (2020): 307–335.

<https://doi.org/10.15603/2176-1078/er.v34n3p307-335>

The article examines the notions of Sick Soul and Healthy-Mindedness according to William James in his work *Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1902). The pragmatism of James is concerned with religious phenomenon in terms of the existential usefulness of beliefs underlying ethical actions and, from this perspective, James perceives religion as a fundamental tool for human psychic balance, with Buddhism and Christianity being the most developed religious systems of humanity. That said, the paper shows these two basic ethical religious postures and presents James’ view of religion.

Boeving, Nicholas Grant. “Metabolizing Death: Re-Thinking Recovery from Substance Use Disorder through the Creative Cartographies of William James and Ernest Becker.” *Pastoral Psychology* 69, no. 3 (2020): 169–83.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-020-00907-4>

This study is designed to bring together the existential-psychoanalytic psychology of Ernest Becker and the pluralistic transpersonal psychology of William James to bear on how perceptions of death and transformations of death anxiety shape, in subtle and significant ways, the phenomenology of substance use disorder. Specifically, this study examines the ways in which these two divergent sympathies (read: ontologies) are actually two reciprocally-enforcing ends of a continuum of how to think about substance use disorder and, more importantly, how to overcome it. In yoking these oppositional cartographies of consciousness together, this article brings to light the integral role that unconscious death anxiety plays in the formation and sustainment of addictions and explores the mechanics of recovery through the lens of the transformation of death anxiety. In doing so, it demonstrates that recovery from substance use disorder is dependent upon the successful metabolization of death anxiety from both a Jamesian and Beckerian perspective.

Bush, Stephen S. “William James’s Democratic Aesthetics.” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 49, no. 1 (2021): 90–111.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jore.12336>

William James is famous for his investigations of the “Varieties of Religious Experience” in which people encounter (what they take to be) the divine. But in his essay, “On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings,” his interest is in our experiences, not of anything purportedly supernatural, but of

one another. He thinks we need to cultivate the capacity to apprehend the intrinsic value of others, even and especially of strangers. We do so in experiences of the wonder and beauty of our fellow citizens, and of our harmony with them. Democratic societies require a sense of attraction to one another's form of life if they are to inspire shared commitments to public goods. Whereas we shouldn't reject the political significance of aversion, contestation, and dissonance, these negative attitudes do not suffice. Sustaining democratic engagement requires attractive attitudes, and among these are the wonder, beauty, and harmony that James promotes.

Croce, Paul. "William James and the Sustainable Transformation of Values, with a Case Study for Rethinking the American Dream." *Human Arenas* (March 2021): 1–15.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s42087-020-00170-2>

This article addresses the call of the Psychology of Global Crises conference for linkage of academic work with social issues in three parts: First, examples from conference participants with their mix of bold calls for social transformation and realization of limits, a combination that generated few clear paths to achieving them. Second, presentation of Jamesian practical idealism with psychological insights for moving past impediments blocking implementation of ideals. And third, a case study of impacts from the most recent prominent crisis, the global pandemic of 2020, which threatens to exacerbate the many crises that had already been plaguing recent history. The tentacles of COVID's impact into so many problems, starting with economic impacts from virus spread, present an opportunity to rethink the hope for constant economic growth, often expressed as the American Dream, an outlook that has driven so many of the problems surging toward crises. Jamesian

awareness of the construction of ideological differences and encouragement of listening to those in disagreement provide not political solutions, but psychological preludes toward improvements in the face of crises.

Crawford, Dan D. “The Neglected Lectures on Conversion and Saintliness in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*: William James’s Search for Redemptive (Saving) Facts.” *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 41, nos. 2-3 (2020): 56–81.
<https://doi.org/10.5406/amerjtheophil.41.2-3.0056>

Crosby, Donald A. “The Reach of Empathy: William James’s Metaphysics and the Environmental Crisis.” *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 41, nos. 2-3 (2020): 133–50.
<https://doi.org/10.5406/amerjtheophil.41.2-3.0133>

Jatuff, Jose. “Atencion selectiva y moral heroica. El vigor de William James frente a la crisis de Fin de Siècle.” [Selective Attention and Heroic Morality: The Vigor of William James in the Face of the crisis of Fin de Siècle]. *Areté* 32, no. 2 (2020): 395–416.
<https://doi.org/10.18800/arete.202002.005>

In the *Principles of Psychology*, William James defends an active version of the mind through which the understanding of the world is carried out via selective attention. This phenomenon, which is understood as an effort of the will, gravitates between the psychological and the moral and is a vigorous bet that comes to confront both the determinism of the positive spirit of the time, as well as the cynical and pessimistic attitudes that follow from this vision. We will explain the psychology of vigor, its practical consequences, how this proposal is located in the crisis of fin de siècle, and the differences in nuances that occurs in relation to later

publications with the aim of contributing to both the understanding of the concept strenuous mood and to the question of heroism in the thinking of this North American philosopher.

Kuznetsova, Maria M. “The Meaning of the Concept of ‘Spiritual Energy’ in the Philosophy of William James and Henry Bergson.” *Russian Journal of Philosophical Sciences* 63, no. 4 (2020): 115–31. [In Russian].

<https://doi.org/10.30727/0235-1188-2020-63-4-115-131>

The article examines the philosophy of Henri Bergson and William James as independent doctrines aimed at rational comprehension of spiritual reality. The doctrines imply the paramount importance of consciousness, the need for continuous spiritual development, the expansion of experience and perception. The study highlights the fundamental role of spiritual energy for individual and universal evolution, which likens these doctrines to the ancient Eastern teaching as well as to Platonism in Western philosophy. The term “spiritual energy” is used by Bergson and James all the way through their creative career, and therefore this concept should be considered in the examination of their solution to the most important philosophical and scientific issues, such as the relationship of matter and spirit, consciousness and brain, cognition, free will, etc. The “radical empiricism” of William James and the “creative evolution” of Henry Bergson should be viewed as conceptions that based on peacemaking goals, because they are aimed at reconciling faith and facts, science and religion through the organic synthesis of sensory and spiritual levels of experience. Although there is a number of modern scientific discoveries that were foreseen by philosophical ideas of Bergson and James, both philosophers advocate for the artificial limitation of the sphere of experimental methods in science. They call not to limit ourselves to the usual intellectual schemes of reality

comprehension, but attempt to touch the “living” reality, which presupposes an increase in the intensity of attention and will, but finally brings us closer to freedom.

Pihlström, Sami. “Kantian Transcendental Pessimism and Jamesian Empirical Meliorism.” *Con-Textos Kantianos: International Journal of Philosophy* 11 (2020): 313–35.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3864972>

Kant’s philosophy was an important background for the pragmatist tradition, even though some of the major classical pragmatists, especially William James, were unwilling to acknowledge their debt to Kant. This essay considers the relation between Kant and James from the perspective of their conceptions of the human condition. In particular, I examine their shared pessimism, employing Vanden Auweele’s (2019) recent analysis of Kant’s pessimism and arguing that this is required by James’s meliorism (which is put forward as a middle-ground option between optimism and pessimism). A comparative inquiry into Kant’s and James’s views on the relation between ethics and religion is provided against this background of their shared philosophical anthropology.

Recchia, Fabio. “Les sentiments de la raison chez William James: Morale et histoire d’un point de vue pragmatiste.” [The Sentiments of Reason in William James: Morality and History from a Pragmatist Perspective]. *Bulletin d’Analyse Phénoménologique* 16, no. 2 (2020): 174–93.
<https://doi.org/10.25518/1782-2041.1174>

Rondel, David. “William James and the Metaphilosophy of Individualism.” *Metaphilosophy* 52, no. 2 (April 2021): 1–14.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/meta.12480>

This paper argues that an individualist perspective is a crucial element of William James's metaphilosophical outlook. In broad outline, the individualist argument the paper attributes to James can be characterized like this. Disputes among philosophers about the optimal point of view from which to consider this or that philosophical problem are themselves only adequately adjudicated from an individualist perspective. That is, when it comes to an assortment of important philosophical questions (not all of them perhaps, but a significant number), an individualist perspective should replace a more objective one, and whether it should or not is itself a question that should be decided from an individualist perspective.

Savransky, Martin. "The Pluralistic Problematic: William James and the Pragmatics of the Pluriverse." *Theory, Culture & Society* 38, no. 2 (2021): 141–59.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276419848030>

In his lectures on pragmatism, William James famously proposed that the question of "the one and the many" constitutes the most central of all philosophic problems, and that it is "central because so pregnant." Prompted by James' proposition, this article explores the intimately political connection in James' thought between his pluralistic metaphysics and the nature of the problematic as a generative force that impregnates worlds and thoughts with differences: what I here call "the pluralistic problematic." Exploring the generative significance of the problematic in James' philosophy, I propose that, where James is concerned, the pluriverse has a thoroughly problematic mode of existence. And pluralism, rather than a celebration of the many, rather than a philosophical exposition on multiple worlds and ontologies, or a theory of the organisation of a diverse polis, is first and foremost a pragmatics of the pluriverse—a political,

experimental and pragmatic response to the ongoing insistence of the pluralistic problematic.

Scherübl, Florian. “Nietzsche *comme pragmatiste*: Die Spuren von William James in Gilles Deleuzes Nietzsche-Interpretation.” *Nietzscheforschung* 27, no. 1 (2020): 323–43. [Nietzsche *comme pragmatiste*: The traces of William James in Gilles Deleuze’s Nietzsche interpretation].
<https://doi.org/10.1515/NIFO-2020-0022>

Stepanenko, Walter Scott. “Ecclesial Belonging in a World of Pure Experience: William James, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Religious Rationality in Crisis.” *Open Theology* 7, no. 1 (2021): 111–28.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2020-0152>

The global COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted several instances of churches violating state issued and scientifically recommended guidelines designed to keep populations healthy and to prevent the further spread of the disease. While these instances are minority responses to these orders, they nonetheless raise questions about the rationality of ecclesial belonging in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this article, I draw on the work of William James and W.E.B. Du Bois to articulate a conception of ecclesial belonging as a social epistemological process engaging a complex, fluid multiplicity of knowers of various scales. I argue that, in this view, ecclesial rationality involves the construction of a concatenation of internal and external practices individual believers and groups can traverse so long as they consistently satisfy a plurality of desiderata. I suggest that what is irrational about religious-based defiance of COVID-19 guidelines is the church-sanctioned severance of internal from external practices. I suggest that this behavior is supported by a failure to grasp the demands of ecclesial rationality rather than

embrace them, and that this conception of rationality may have been eroded by the value-neutral skepticism of secular rationality.

Weidenbaum, Jonathan. “To Laugh in a Pluralistic Universe: William James and the Philosophy of Humor.” *The Philosophy of Humor Yearbook* 1, no. 1 (2020): 117–34.

<https://doi.org/10.1515/phhumyb-2020-0010>

The purpose of this article is to enlist the work of the American philosopher and psychologist William James in order to investigate the deeper significance of humor. It is neither James’s character nor anything he states directly about humor or laughter that is under discussion here, but the cosmos as grasped through his bold metaphysics and rich phenomenological observations. The thought of James, it is argued, discloses our inherence within a universe rife with ambiguity, complexity, and incongruity. I explore how these features of reality, particularly when illuminated through James’s lush prose, may cause us to laugh. In addition, the insights of James are employed to examine the close relationship between humor and certain forms of religious experience, as well as with horror.