

RELATED SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS ON JAMES

April 2018 – May 2019



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.



Aiken, Scott and Michael Hodges. “Expressivism, Moral Judgement, and Disagreement: A Jamesian Program.” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 32, no. 4 (2018): 628-656. <https://doi.org/10.5325/jspecphil.32.4.0628>

Expressivism, the view that ethical claims are expressions of psychological states, has advantages such as closing the gap between normative claims and motivation and avoiding difficulties posed by the ontological status of values. However, it seems to make substantive moral disagreement impossible. Here, we develop a suggestion from William James as a pragmatist extension of expressivism. If we look at a set of moral claims from the perspective of the maximally comprehensive set of co-possible satisfactions, then a claim can be treated as true if it is part of that set. There then is a practical “fact of the matter” about the members of such a set. This makes the notion of moral truth analogous to pragmatic notions of scientific truth, defined as what will withstand inquiry to its ideal limit, and thereby provides a way for expressivists to make sense of moral disagreement.

Bella, Michela. “‘Gesto’ e identità personale. Per una epistemologia del sé in chiave pragmatista” [Gesture and Personal Identity. Looking at the Epistemology of the Self through a Pragmatic Lens]. *Lebenswelt: Aesthetics and Philosophy of Experience* 13 (2018): 101-112. <https://doi.org/10.13130/2240-9599/11114>

This article aims to show the validity of an actualization of William James’s pragmatist epistemology of psychology for the construction of personal identity. Following Giovanni Maddalena’s theoretical hypothesis of “gesture” as a complete synthetic tool for the acquisition of knowledge, an in-depth analysis of the continuous and dynamic conception of personal identity proposed by James may be helpful today to better develop the emotional-somatic dimension of synthetic reasoning. As far as the epistemology of the Self is concerned,

significant continuities and discontinuities are drawn from James's naturalized integrated conception of personal identity in the light of this new Peirce-inspired interpretation. This attempt is part of a wider project in which recovering the character of psychological and ontological processual continuity in James's epistemology makes a considerable contribution to the development of a comprehensive understanding of mental models, one that avoids to tighten up these models as it happens in most of the contemporary epistemologies of the self.

Boone, Mark J. "Augustine and William James on the Rationality of Faith." *The Heythrop Journal* (2018): 1-12.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/heyj.13123>

Augustine and William James both argue that religious faith can be both practical and rational even in the absence of knowledge. Augustine argues that religious faith is trust and that trust is a normal, proper, and even necessary way of believing. Beginning with faith, we then work towards knowledge by means of philosophical contemplation. James' "The Will to Believe" makes pragmatic arguments for the rationality of faith. Although we do not know (yet) whether God exists, faith is a choice between the risk of believing something false and the risk of not believing something true, and in the absence of convincing evidence we may decide for ourselves which risk we prefer. We may be able to experience God in the future and thereby gain knowledge, yet this may be contingent on our willingness to believe. There are key differences, however. Augustine is a Christian with a neo-Platonic bent, James an empiricist defending the religion of your choice. These differences may be less significant than they first appear. After explaining Augustine and then James I draw out the major points of comparison and contrast and suggest a few reasons their insights might be at least partially synthesized.

Bouriau, Christophe. “Fictionalisme théologique versus pragmatisme religieux: Vaihinger ou James?” [Theological Fictionalism versus Religious Pragmatism: Vaihinger or James?]. *ThéoRèmes* 13 (2018).

<https://doi.org/10.4000/theoremes.1901>

This paper is part of a larger philosophical project whose finality is to present the Kantian and Neokantian sources of what is now called “Theological fictionalism”. In particular, it proposes to compare the “as-if religion” of the Neokantian Hans Vaihinger to William James's religious pragmatism, explaining a preference for the second.

Bruhn, Christopher and Sue Yeon Syn. “Pragmatic Thought as a Philosophical Foundation for Collaborate Tagging and the Semantic Web.” *Journal of Documentation* 74, no. 3 (2018): 575-587.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-07-2017-0101>

The purpose of this paper is to use ideas drawn from two founders of American pragmatism, William James and Charles Sanders Peirce, in order to propose a philosophical foundation that supports the value of collaborative tagging and reinforces the structure and goals of the Semantic Web. The study employs a close analysis of key literature by James and Peirce to answer recent calls for a philosophy of the Web and to respond to research in the LIS literature that has assessed the value and limitations of folksonomy. Moreover, pragmatic views are applied to illustrate the relationships among collaborative tagging, linked data, and the Semantic Web. With a philosophical foundation in place, the study highlights the value of the minority tags that fall within the so-called “long tail” of the power law graph, and the importance of granting sufficient time for the full value of folksonomy to be revealed. The discussion goes further to explore how

“collaborative tagging” could evolve into “collaborative knowledge” in the form of linked data. Specifically, Peirce’s triadic architectonic is shown to foster an understanding of the construction of linked data through the functional requirements for bibliographic records entity-relation model and resource description framework triples, and James’s image of the multiverse anticipates the goals Tim Berners-Lee has articulated for the Semantic Web. This study is unique in using Jamesian and Peircean thinking to argue for the value of folksonomy and to suggest implications for the Semantic Web.

Carroll, Jerome. “William James and 18th-Century Anthropology: Holism, Scepticism and the Doctrine of Experience.” *History of the Human Sciences* 31, no. 3 (July 2018): 3-20.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0952695118764060>

This article discusses the common ground between William James and the tradition of philosophical anthropology. Recent commentators on this overlap have characterised philosophical anthropology as combining science (in particular biology and medicine) and Kantian teleology, for instance in Kant’s seminal definition of anthropology as being concerned with what the human being makes of itself, as distinct from what attributes it is given by nature. This article registers the tension between Kantian thinking, which reckons to ground experience in a priori categories, and William James’s psychology, which begins and ends with experience. It explores overlap between James’s approach and the characteristic holism of 18th-century philosophical anthropology, which centres on the idea of understanding and analysing the human as a whole, and presents the main anthropological elements of James’s position, namely his antipathy to separation, his concerns about the binomial terms of traditional philosophy, his preference for experience over substances, his sense that this holist doctrine of experience

shows a way out of sterile impasses, a preference for description over causation, and scepticism. It then goes on to register the common ground with key ideas in the work of anthropologists from around 1800, along with some references to anthropologists who come in James's wake, in particular Max Scheler and Arnold Gehlen, in order to reconceptualise the connection between James's ideas and the tradition of anthropological thinking in German letters since the late 18th-century, beyond its characterisation as a combination of scientific positivism and teleology.

Charland, Louis C. "William James on Passion and Emotion: Influence of Théodule Ribot." *Emotion Review* (2019): 1-13.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073918821438>

This case study in the history of "passion" and "emotion" is based on the writings of William James. James is famous for his (1884) theory of emotion. However, like his illustrious colleague, Théodule Ribot, he also recognized the importance of "passion" in psychology. That aspect of James's work is underappreciated. Ribot explicitly defends the necessity of including "passion" in psychology. James does not go that far. But he does utilize a very similar concept in connection with the term "passion" and there can be little doubt he considered it scientifically legitimate. Consequently, like Ribot, James must be considered an exception to historical accounts of this period which describe a transition from "passion" to "emotion" in which "passion" plays no part.

Cockayne, Joshua and Jack Warman. "The Will Not to Believe." *Sophia* (2018): 1-13.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11841-018-0689-y>

Is it permissible to believe that God does not exist if the evidence is inconclusive? In this paper, we give a new argument in support of atheistic belief modelled on William

James's *The Will to Believe*. According to James, if the evidence for a proposition, *p*, is ambiguous, and believing that *p* is a genuine option, then it can be permissible to let your passions decide. Typically, James's argument has been used as a defense of passionately caused theistic belief. However, in the existing literature, little attention has been given to topic of passionately caused atheistic belief. Here, we give much needed attention to the issue of how areligious passions can justify atheistic belief. Following James, we argue that if atheism is a genuine option for an agent, it is permissible to believe that God does not exist based on her hopes, desires, wishes, or whatever passions incline her to disbelieve. After defending the coherence of passionately caused atheism, we go on to suggest why this position is a tenable one for the atheist to adopt.

Croce, Paul. "Challenging His Teacher's Racism: Was Huck William James?" *HuffPost*, December 31, 2017.

<https://www.huffpost.com/entry/challenging-his-teachers-racism-was-huck-william-b-5a490387e4b0d86c803c77a9>

As a science student in 1865-66, William James joined the expedition to Brazil led by Louis Agassiz as an opportunity to test his vocational choice for natural history. With wide public support in the US and Brazil, the Swiss-born professor at Harvard University's Lawrence Scientific School presented his expedition as a chance to disprove Charles Darwin's theory of species development by natural selection, and to demonstrate the inferiority of non-white populations. James soon soured on his teacher's ideas. Through his fieldwork, he accepted the plausibility of Darwinism, and actually admired the Native and African Brazilians that Agassiz disparaged. Like Huck Finn following the evidence of his own immediate experience, despite the racist assumptions around him, James noticed cautiously that "no gentleman of Europe has better manners," and even observed that the multi-racial Brazilians had "not a

bit of our damned anglo saxon brutality and vulgarity.” And James even drew a respectful portrait of Alexandrina, the mixed race local guide hired by the expedition party; in capturing her dignity and intelligence, James offered wordless defiance of the racism all around him.

Croce, Paul. “Waking From the Dream of Total Victory.” *Civil American* 3 (January 19, 2018).

<https://www.philosophersinamerica.com/2018/01/19/waking-from-the-dream-of-total-victory>

While it is important to counter false information with truth, it is at least as important to comprehend why fake news seems plausible to so many people. William James assesses the psychological basis for the elusiveness of the “total fullness of truth,” with ways to sort through the abundance for reaching plausible conclusions. Recognition of the robustness of information and of the psychology of selective attention is not an endorsement of fakery, but a path toward addressing it. In fact, combating fake news only with critique does not address the psychological appeal of the stories at its roots. According to the conventional wisdom of our time, with enough accuracy in the real truth, fakery can be defeated. But in a democracy with a proliferation of diverse minds and plenty of platforms for dissemination, no one truth can easily shut out all the other views and interpretations. Now what? James presents a democratic way to address this challenge of democracy: He suggests ways of understanding, even without endorsement, the sources of different people’s stories, and even the potential to learn new layers of truth from encounter with perspectives that include challenging differences. These paths toward seeing the world through the eyes of others can strengthen democracy.

Croce, Paul J. “William James’s Psychology of Philosophizing: Intellectual Diversity, Selective Attention, and the Sentiments in Our Rationalities.” *The Good Society* 26, no. 2-3 (2017): 323-337. <https://doi.org/10.5325/goodsociety.26.2-3.0323>

American psychologist and philosopher William James (1842–1910) developed a mediating path to understand and cope with intellectual disagreement. This template did not come to him any more easily than it would for anyone dealing with the contemporary challenges of deep cultural and political polarization. Although the compelling contrasts he experienced in his young adulthood, especially the competing commitments of science and religion, initially filled him with indecision and discouragement, he later synthesized the parts of his education into a platform for comprehending intellectual differences in relation to each other. James’s approach to intellectual differences can be summarized with “three Rs”: the psychological *roots* of intellectual differences, their *relations* to each other, and effective ways to *respond* to them. James's ideas offer an education in strategies for coping with disagreement based on understanding how differences emerge to encourage searching for bridges across diversity.

Kime, Katie Givens and John R. Snarey. “A Jamesian Response to Reductionism in Neuropsychology of Religious Experience.” *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* 40, no. 2-3 (2018): 307-325.

<https://doi.org/10.1163/15736121-12341357>

The neuroscience revolution has revived interpretations of religious experiences as wholly dependent on biological conditions. William James cautioned against allowing such neurological reductionism to overwhelm other useful perspectives. Contemporary psychologists of religion have raised similar cautions, but have failed to engage James as a full conversation partner. In this article, we present a contemporary, applied version of James's perspective. We

clarify the problem by reviewing specific James-like contemporary concerns about reductionism in the neuropsychological study of religion. Then, most centrally, we employ three of James's conceptual tools – pragmatism, pluralism, and radical empiricism – to moderate contemporary reductionism. Finally, we point to a constructive approach through which neuroscientists might collaborate with scholars in the humanities and psychosocial sciences, which is consistent with our conclusion that it is often no longer fruitful to separate neurobiological studies from studies that are psychosocial or sociocultural.

Kirkland, Karl. “The Influence of William James on the Spirituality of Alcoholics’ Anonymous.” *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* (2018): 1-9.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167818782522>

This article challenges Bevacqua and Hoffman’s (2010) seminal article in this journal on the degree to which Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) falls short in its attempt to download the complete spirituality of William James into the AA canon. Results of the analysis of this question reveal that AA has fully incorporated the depth of *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902/1985). When application of James’s pragmatic method is applied to AA, the organization emerges as complete, with the abundant fruit of almost 2 million members worldwide. AA practices are not exclusivist, and do not offer a “one size fits all” restrictive paradigm. Rather, inspired by James, AA consistently gives explicit permission to members to find a path of their own construction that develops into an inclusive paradigm that has a lifelong trajectory.

LaMothe, Ryan. "Writing Towards Death: William James and Sigmund Freud and Sustaining Objects/Practices." *Pastoral Psychology* (2019): 1-15.

<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.

Lekan, Todd. "Who Are Moral Philosophers? Ethics William James Style." *The Pluralist* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 81-96.

<https://doi.org/10.5406/pluralist.13.1.0081>

The paper argues that although William James is successful in demonstrating the folly of traditional moral philosophy's preoccupation with proving other-regarding moral obligations to an egoist skeptic, his meta-ethical argument for inclusivity seems vulnerable to skeptical doubts raised by Aiken/Talisse's (2011) intolerant fundamentalist. I argue that an explication of the concrete experiential starting point of James' moral philosophy puts to rest these doubts. This standpoint includes James' relational account of the self, which stresses identity formation via the capacity to sympathetically apprehend the point of view of others, and James' phenomenological exploration, in the essay "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings," to the experience of overcoming blindness to others' alien ideals.

Matos, Mario Sérgio Coutinho and Marcus Vinicius Cunha. "Conversas de William James com professores e estudantes: lições para a atualidade" [William James Talks with Teachers and Students: Lessons for the Present]. *Perspectiva* 36, no. 3 (2018): 961-977.

<https://doi.org/10.5007/2175-795X.2018v36n3p961>

This article analyzes the educational conceptions of William James in the book *Talks to Teachers on Psychology*, published in 1899, in which the notion of teaching as art is found. In order to broaden the understanding of this notion, we refer to the reflections made by James in the book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, published in 1902. The purpose of this article is to revitalize James' conceptions in order to contribute to authors who critically discuss current trends in education.

Meierdiercks, M. Laurel-Leigh and John Robert Snarey. "James, William and the Religious Phenomenology of Religious Experience." In *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion, 3rd Edition* edited by David A. Leeming. New York and Berlin: Springer, 2018.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-6086-2>

This article demonstrates William James' place in the wider narrative of the phenomenology of religious experience and ultimately how his connection to Edmund Husserl can shed light on what James' work can offer to current scholarship. James made vital contributions to the development of phenomenology and is a valuable resource for those looking to perform a phenomenology of religious experience. First, the article traces how James influenced Husserl by examining both the historical and methodological links between the two thinkers, making use of Husserl's notes, some of which credit James with helping Husserl to develop specific aspects of his thought. Then selected ideas central to James's phenomenological approach are described. These notes on James's understanding of phenomena, intentionality, essences, and his early versions of the epoché and eidetic reduction, plot a clear picture of James's importance in the development of phenomenological thought. These elements come together in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* to portray a budding phenomenology of religious experience.

One does not necessarily need to claim that James is a phenomenologist, only that his work influenced Husserl's formation of phenomenology and that James's unfinished work contains the beginnings of phenomenological inquiry, particularly into religious experiences. Acknowledging his role in the development of phenomenology and the phenomenological nature of his work can lead us to re-examine *The Varieties of Religious Experience* as an early example of a phenomenology of religious experience.

Mollard, Romain. "Les sirènes de l'absolu: William James et Josiah Royce en perspective" [The Sirens of the Absolute: William James and Josiah Royce in Perspective]. *ThéoRèmes* 13 (2018).

<https://doi.org/10.4000/theoremes.1975>

The question of a pragmatist justification of religious beliefs appeared in James's writing in 1898, as an alternative to Royce's theory of the absolute. This pragmatist justification was repeated in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* in 1902 but it failed to give a proper account of the truth of religious beliefs based on private religious experiences and ultimately failed to answer Royce's arguments. James knows that any possible pragmatist justification of religious belief based on the practical consequences of religious belief must be completed by a metaphysical theory of the non-natural causality of religious experiences. But that would require going beyond the dualistic and naturalistic account of the *Varieties*. Nevertheless, the difficulties of the monistic theories of the *Essays in Radical Empiricism* pushed James to defend, in *A Pluralistic Universe*, a pantheistic theory in which the Absolute is accepted as a logical possibility, which in turn supposes to accept the composition theory of consciousness that he had rejected in *The Principle of Psychology*. Therefore, James's final theory isn't very different to Royce's theory,

since Royce's theory is not a theory of the necessity of the Absolute but rather a theory of its possibility.

Simonton, Dean Keith. "Creative Genius as Casual Agent in History: William James's 1880 Theory Revisited and Revitalized." *Review of General Psychology* 22, no. 4 (2018): 406-421.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/gpr0000165>

Near the onset of his illustrious career, the psychologist William James proposed a theory of how individual genius can exert a unique and enduring causal impact on the history of civilization. After first attacking the prevailing view that sociocultural determinism rendered individual creators and leaders mere epiphenomena, James argued that the causal effect of the genius paralleled that of the spontaneous variation or mutation in the theory of evolution by natural selection. Although his specific arguments suffer severe problems even from the standpoint of his own theory, current psychological research on creativity and genius indicate how his basic thesis can be revised and updated with respect to creative genius. This revision and updating concentrates specifically on what is known about the behavioral productivity, thinking processes and procedures, personality characteristics, and early developmental experiences in highly creative individuals. These modern enhancements then lead to the integrated discussion of Jamesian free will and the causal agency of the creative genius. The net result is a revitalized theory of how it even becomes possible for single individuals to make creative choices that not only may cause changes in their own lives, but also alter the course of world history.

Stepanenko, Walter Scott. “Jamesian Finite Theism and the Problems of Suffering.” *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 10, no. 4 (2018): 1-25.

<https://doi.org/10.24204/ejpr.v10i4.1966>

William James advocated a form of finite theism, motivated by epistemological and moral concerns with scholastic theism and pantheism. In this article, I elaborate James’s case for finite theism and his strategy for dealing with these concerns, which I dub the problems of suffering. I contend that James is at the very least implicitly aware that the problem of suffering is not so much one generic problem but a family of related problems. I argue that one of James’s great contributions to philosophical theism is his advocacy for the view that adequate theistic philosophizing is not so much about cracking this family of problems, but finding a version of the problem to embrace.

Tan, Tobias. “William James and Embodied Religious Belief.” *Contemporary Pragmatism* 15, no. 3 (2018): 366-386.

<https://doi.org/10.1163/18758185-01503006>

Scholars have recently identified resemblances between pragmatist thought and contemporary trends in cognitive science in the area of 'embodied cognition' or '4E cognition.' In this article I explore these resemblances in the account of religious belief provided by the classical pragmatist philosopher William James. Although James's psychology does not always parallel the commitments of embodied cognition, his insights concerning the role of emotion and socio-cultural context in shaping religious belief, as well as the action-oriented nature of such beliefs, resonate with embodied and embedded accounts of religious belief. James's insights are readily extended in light of contemporary embodied cognition research to highlight the interdependency between religious belief of individuals and the cognitive scaffolding provided by embodied religious practices.

Télez Maqueo, David. “Es el esfuerzo una característica esencial de la voluntad? Una aproximación a William James desde la psicología de Tomás de Aquino” [Is the Effort an Essential Feature of the Will? An Approach to William James from Thomas Aquinas's Psychology]. *Veritas: Journal of Philosophy & Theology* 40 (August 2018): 29-47.

<https://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-92732018000200029>

William James puts forth the feeling of effort as an essential feature of the will in such a way that its presence would be an undeniable sign of a voluntary act, and its absence proves that the will is missing. This historically accepted consideration has contributed to the prevailing assumption that the power of will depends on the more or less effort to execute an act: the more effort one puts into operation, the more will one have. The purpose of this article is to show a consideration of the will according to these terms disagree with Thomas Aquinas's vision, who teaches that there are voluntary actions that don't take hard work. As a result of the Aquinian stance, the common belief that the most valuable actions are the most difficult, ends up being disputable.

Thoilliez, Bianca. “Fitting Religious Life into the Life of Schools. James and Rorty in Conversation.” *Ethics and Education* 14, no. 2: 157-170.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2019.1587681>

The article investigates which epistemological considerations justify how religious life fits into the school life, and examines the debate on the participation of religiosity in the education system. I do this, first, by addressing the pedagogical implications of the distinction between public and private as maintained by Richard Rorty and, second, by reconsidering the pluralist metaphysics held by William James as an alternative path to understanding and re-addressing the question of religious life in school life. The article analyzes how the strict separation of projects of individual self-creation and the public

sphere, as defended by Rorty, poses problems in implementing pluralism in democratic societies and their educational institutions.

Weinfeld, David. "Les Intellectuals in America: William James, the Dreyfus Affair, and the Development of the Pragmatist Intellectual." *The Journal of American History* 105, no. 1 (June 2018): 19-44.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jay006>

The Dreyfus Affair in France gave birth to the modern intellectual. Emile Zola and fellow free-thinkers defended the wrongly-accused Jewish military captain Alfred Dreyfus from charges of treason. Derided by conservatives as "les intellectuels," the Dreyfusards employed the label as a banner for believers in universal values of truth and justice. In 1907, William James brought the term "intellectual" to the United States. James' version of the intellectual, however, differed considerably from Zola's. This paper looks at James' reaction to the Dreyfus Affair, specifically his conscious or unconscious misinterpretation of Emile Zola's epistemology. This misinterpretation led him to delineate two notions of the intellectual with divergent philosophical outlooks: the former more absolutist, universalist, positivist and communalist, the latter more individualist, pluralist, pragmatist, and cosmopolitan. The paper also incorporates James' brother Henry's reaction to the Dreyfus Affair, to paint a fuller picture of this Jamesian contrast between the European and American intellectual traditions.