

RELATED SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS ON WILLIAM JAMES

August 2023-April 2024



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, Jordan Williamson at periodicals@williamjamesstudies.org and we will include it at the next opportunity.



Berkovich, Rotem, and Nachshon Meiran. "Pleasant Emotional Feelings Follow One of the most Basic Psychophysical Laws (Weber's Law) as most Sensations do." *Emotion (Washington, D.C.)*, vol. 23, no. 5, 2023, pp. 1213-1223.

Emotion episodes may include a conscious aspect of the emotion, namely being aware of our own emotional experience. Despite explosion in research over previous years, it remains unclear how emotions reach awareness and become feelings. Already in 1884, William James argued that emotional feelings resemble ordinary sensations in this respect. Here, using a novel model-based ratio scale of emotion intensity, we provide one of the strongest pieces of evidence supporting James' perceptual theory by showing that emotion awareness obeys one of the most fundamental laws of perception, Weber's law. According to this law, stimulus encoding accuracy decreases with intensity. In this work, we asked participants to provide binary pleasant-versus-unpleasant reports of their experience when watching normed emotion-eliciting pictures (NAPS; Marchewka et al., 2014). The results validate our model's measure of emotion intensity by showing its monotonous relation to picture norms. Most importantly, they show, for the first time, that in humans, pleasant emotion experiences follow Weber's classical psychophysical law-indicating decreased encoding precision with increasing pleasantness. This result supports James' theory, suggesting that (pleasant) emotions reach awareness just as ordinary sensations do.

Braaksma, Ymko. "Taking Pragmatism Seriously enough: Toward a Deeper Understanding of the British Debate Over Pragmatism, Ca. 1900–1910." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 85, no. 1, 2024, pp. 65-86.

Classical pragmatism has often been branded as being primarily a new theory of truth. Using F.C.S. Schiller's response to an article written by F.H. Bradley, I show that, in fact, a certain theory of thought is the essential point of pragmatism according to Schiller as well as John Dewey and William James. I go on to argue that without taking this theory of thought into account we cannot properly understand the British reception of classical pragmatism in the early 1900s. I illustrate the significance of this contention by criticizing the responses to pragmatism given by Bertrand Russell and G.E. Moore.

Dadaian, Anna. "Jung and James." *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*, 2023.

This paper draws parallels between William James' thought and Carl Gustav Jung's work in *Psychological Types*, showing that both provided epistemologies that strived to redefine the notion of scientific objectivity to incorporate the realm of psychological experience. Jung generally admired James' pragmatism and his pluralistic vision. He shared James' idea that philosophical (and, therefore, epistemological) positions were ultimately expressions of certain psychological attitudes, which meant that a psychological typology could be used to account for the "personal equations" of philosophers, scientists, and psychologists in particular. It will be shown that Jung borrowed from James the idea of a psychological typology as an epistemological method, which he believed would ensure a more complete understanding of scientific objectivity. Parallels will then be drawn between Jung's notion of the "problem of opposites" and James' concept of the "divided self," both of which were resolved through religion. Crucially, for both Jung and James, expanding the borders of science to include psychology also meant incorporating religious experience. Finally, this paper argues that Jung's epistemological project in *Psychological Types* effectively expanded on James'

pragmatism by synthesising various elements of James's thought – pluralism, the personal equation, typology, and the divided self – into one epistemological framework. Jung's work thus provides an important case study for the history of pragmatism.

Hackett, J. E. "Radical Empiricism as Naturalistic Phenomenology Vs. Non-Naturalistic Phenomenology of Max Scheler." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. 37, no. 4, 2023, pp. 503-544.

In this article, the author wishes to defend a naturalistic version of phenomenology rooted in and expropriated from William James's radical empiricism against Max Scheler's non-naturalistic phenomenology. By drawing from Jack Reynolds's arguments for a minimal phenomenology, the author posits that radical empiricism is a middle way between the misguided self-sufficiency of transcendental phenomenology and the misguided self-sufficiency of ontological naturalism. The orthodox reading of Scheler as a dualist is found problematic, and in outlining four propositions characteristic of Scheler's positions, the author motivates resources from Jamesian thought to argue for the superiority of a naturalistic phenomenology.

Houston, Sam. "The "Metaphysical Monster" and Muslim Theology: William James, Sherman Jackson, and the Problem of Black Suffering." *American Journal of Islam & Society (Online)*, vol. 40, no. 3-4, 2023, pp. 6-40.

By placing Blackamerican Muslim theologian Sherman A. Jackson's work, especially his *Islam and the Problem of Black Suffering*, in conversation with the work of American pragmatist William James, I explore the pragmatic dimensions of Islamic thought through an examination of Jackson's account of classical Islamic theology put forward in response to the problem of Black suffering. In doing so, I argue that Jackson's account both parallels and challenges a Jamesian account of

religion. It parallels James in that it speaks of the “practical effectiveness” of the “web of beliefs” constituting Islamic doctrines of God in inculcating certain habits of seeing and acting in the world that best deal with the challenges of “black experience”; however, in this process, the category of “experience” itself and its role in the verification of belief is thoroughly interrogated. In his critical engagement with Black philosopher of religion William R. Jones, Jackson exposes the uncritical role played by “experience” in Jones’ thought, a charge which will be made of James as well. In making this argument about Jackson, I hope to provide an example of a Muslim theologian who makes explicit the pragmatic dimensions of religious doctrine, demonstrating that thick theological discourse can be practical.

Kiverstein, Julian, and Giuseppe Flavio Artese. "The Experience of Affordances in an Intersubjective World." *Topoi*, 2023.

Rizzo, Mario J. "The Antipaternalist Psychology of William James." *Behavioural Public Policy*, 2023.

Schmidt, Bettina E., and Kate Stockly. "The Fruits of Spiritual Experiences during the Pandemic: COVID-19 and the Effects of Non-Ordinary Experiences." *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society (Online)*, vol. 23, no. 8, 2023, pp. 1-29.

This paper presents new research about spiritual experiences during the COVID -19 pandemic. The aim is to discuss the impact of spiritual experiences on people’s lives and relationships. Building upon William James’ four features of the “fruits” of religious experience as a conceptual frame, the paper presents data from two surveys in which participants narrated spiritual experiences and reflected on the impacts of those experiences. We start with a short presentation of James’ ideas

about the fruits of religious experience. The next section outlines four themes that have emerged from the narratives of spiritual experiences during the pandemic: impacts on people's relationships with their religious communities, shifts in one's subjective sense of spiritual connection and intuition, encounters with spiritual figures and near-death experiences, and interpretations of COVID -19 as a spiritual contagion. The final section broadens the discussion from the impact of specific spiritual experiences to include spiritual responses to the pandemic more generally, leading to a discussion of the experiences within the wider debate in fruits of religious experience.

Thomas, Emily. "The Specious Present in English Philosophy 1749-1785: Theories and Experiments in Hartley, Priestley, Tucker, and Watson." *Philosophers' Imprint*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2023.

Drawing on the 1870s-1880s work of Shadworth Hodgson and Robert Kelly, William James famously characterised the specious present as 'the short duration of which we are immediately and incessantly sensible'. Literature on the pre-history of late nineteenth century specious present theories clusters around the work of John Locke and Thomas Reid, and I argue it is incomplete. The pre-history is missing an interconnected group of English philosophers writing on the present between 1749 and 1785: David Hartley, Joseph Priestley, Abraham Tucker, and William Watson. With William Herschel, Watson even conducted experiments to determine the limits of human temporal perception. These thinkers do not appear in the specious present literature, or broader historical surveys of temporal consciousness. Yet this paper shows that they all produced important work on our experience of the present, variously defending theses that can be found in subsequent specious present theories. It argues their texts reward study, and may have influenced later theorists; contextualises the

nineteenth century theories of James and others; and pushes back the start date of the 'standard history' of micro time by over half a century.