

Presenters and Session Chairs  
For the William James Society Symposium  
In the Footsteps of William James

PRESENTERS:

**Doug Anderson**, [dra3@siu.edu](mailto:dra3@siu.edu), Southern Illinois University

“William James in the Woods: Glenmore and Chocorua”

Abstract: I will talk about James's work with Thomas Davidson in NY and his reflections on stays at Chocorua. The upshot will be a sketch of the importance of nature as wilderness for James's thought generally. My hypothesis is that there are some Thoreauvian themes at work in James's thought that are seldom made explicit.

Biographical Sketch: Bio: I teach philosophy at SIUC. Have studied American philosophy and the history of philosophy for many years. Am presently Editor-in-Chief of Peirce *Transactions* and author, most recently, of *Philosophy Americana* from Fordham Press.

**Frederick R. Bauer**, [fbauer@assumption.edu](mailto:fbauer@assumption.edu), Assumption College

"Pragmatism: The Brain? Or God?"

Abstract: James wrote, "The 'entire brain' is not a physical fact at all!" He regarded the question, "Are 'mind' and 'brain' names for two different real things or two names for just one?", as a very practical item of public discourse. Richard Watson agrees: "When humankind finally faces the fact that the mind is the brain, that there is no independently existing mental soul to survive the death of the body, that none of us chirpy sparrows is immortal..., there will be a revolution in human thought the like of which none has gone before." Can the 'pragmatist turn' help here?

Biographical Sketch: Frederick R. Bauer, associate professor of philosophy at Assumption College in Worcester MA, has been teaching since 1967. He also holds an MA in psychology.

**Eric P. Charles** [[epc2@psu.edu](mailto:epc2@psu.edu)], Pennsylvania State University

“Edwin Bissell Holt’s William James”

Abstract: E. B. Holt was a student, friend, and colleague of William James during the last fifteen years of James’s life. The personal and professional traits of Holt’s James can be reconstructed from the correspondences of Holt with the James family, and from Holt’s professional writings. Holt’s work, and his student’s work, represents a significant part of James’s legacy in psychology and philosophy. Holt’s realist interpretation of James’s Radical Empiricism provides a unique insight into the possibility of viewing radical behaviorism as part of James’s legacy. And anyway, what was Holt was up to in his ten-year-long attempt to revise James’s Briefer Course?

Biographical Sketch: Eric P. Charles, Assistant Professor of Psychology, the Pennsylvania State University, Altoona. Dr. Charles has published theoretical and empirical papers regarding animal behavior and the ecological psychology of James J. Gibson. Recently this work has involved resurrecting insights from E. B. Holt’s New Realism, and resurrecting interest in Holt more generally. He has put together an edited book on Holt to be published in the Fall of 2010 and has talked on the connection between Holt, James, and Gibson at Cheiron.

**Paul J. Croce**, [pcroce@stetson.edu](mailto:pcroce@stetson.edu), Stetson University

“A Psychology of Philosophizing: A Jamesian Framework for Conciliating Difference”

Abstract: In the late 1870s, while working in physiological psychology, William James brought his scientific studies into his philosophical reflection. He set out to write a philosophy text on the motives that lead people to philosophize. He never completed “The Psychology of Philosophizing,” but its chapters became his first major publications and his initial claim to fame, and their insights diffused into much of his later work. A close examination of these early writings suggests both these biographical roots, and also an outlook for reconciling intellectual and ideological differences. James is well known as a theorist who craved (to paraphrase his comment in Pragmatism, Harvard edition, p. 14) the good things on both sides of various differences, and in these works he provides a way of understanding their relation to each other. James set his direction with “The Sentiment of Rationality,” in which he recognizes the role of “feeling[s] of sufficiency” in various commitments, and this and related texts suggest a template for coping with difference.

Biographical Sketch: Paul J. Croce is a Professor of American Studies and Director of the Student Research in Science and Religion (2SR) Program at Stetson University. He has written Science and Religion in the Era of William James: Eclipse of Certainty, 1820-1880, and he is past Chair of the Forum for the History of Human Science and current President of the William James Society.

**Donald A. Crosby**, [Donald.crosby@att.net](mailto:Donald.crosby@att.net), Colorado State University  
“Experience, Self, and World in the Philosophy of William James”

Abstract: I critically analyze two closely related themes in James’s philosophy: the role of “pure experience” and the relations of mental and extra-mental reality. I compare his outlook with some recent developments in contemporary philosophy of science and philosophy of mind and in doing so seek to show that his thought is a viable platform to be built upon for arriving at a credible conception of the natures and relations of mind and matter, self and world. The conception I support and defend is that of a thoroughgoing material basis and character of all reality, including that of life and mind. I argue that a materialistic metaphysics, when properly conceived, is entirely consistent with James’s philosophy of pure experience.

Biographical Sketch: Donald A. Crosby is Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at Colorado State University. His most recent book, soon to be published by SUNY Press, is entitled *Faith and Reason: Their Roles in Religious and Secular Life*.

**Pamela Crosby** [<mailto:pcrosby@fsu.edu>], Florida State University “The Social Value of Undergraduate Learning: William James on Educating Moral Leaders for Democracy”

Abstract: For James, a principal aim of education in a democracy is to produce leaders of high moral character who help to counter adverse influences on its citizenry of popular culture, corporate practices, and powerful media. In “Social Value of the College Bred,” he calls for every college discipline to offer courses couched in historical and biographical contexts that teach students to identify what persons of worthy character and high accomplishment *do*. In “The Moral Equivalent of War,” James argues that young adults should do community service as a way to form their moral character as well as to help improve their society. The implications of the integration of James’s two approaches—engagement in service learning and historical/biographical study—for current educational practice are examined in light of recent research on character development of college students.

Biographical Sketch: Pamela Crosby is co-editor of *Journal of College and Character* and editor of *Character Clearinghouse* sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at Florida State University.

**Mike Dieciuc** [michaeld180@gmail.com] Xavier University

“James and the Resurgence of Psychedelic Research in Psychology”

Abstract: It is not an exaggeration to say that the revival of William James’ ideas are responsible for a recent renaissance in scientific research. For over 40 years research with psychedelic substances was halted, despite the enthusiasm and efficacy that they displayed in psychology as a successful adjunct to psychotherapy. Forty years later, that branch of science is reemerging and is finding itself dealing with matters of spiritual import. In short my presentation will discuss how the philosophy of William James, with his unique approach to consciousness, religious experience, and epistemology, have had a direct impact on the emerging field of study that combines science and spirituality.

Biographical Sketch: Michael Dieciuc attended Xavier University and lives in Chicago. With undergraduate work in philosophy and psychology, he wrote the thesis, “Beyond Real and Surreal: A pragmatic approach to the mystical experience” in 2009. His work shows the influence of Terence McKenna, Friedrich Nietzsche, and William James, and he continues to research the intersection of psychedelics, psychology, and philosophy.

**Bob Doyle**, [rodoyle@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:rodoyle@fas.harvard.edu), Harvard University, “Jamesian Free Will”

Abstract: Research into two-stage models of “free will” – first “free” random generation of alternative possibilities, followed by “willed” adequately determined decisions consistent with character, values, and desires – suggests that William James was in 1884 the first of a dozen philosophers and scientists to propose such a two-stage model for free will.

By limiting chance to the generation of alternative possibilities, James was the first to overcome the standard two-part argument against free will, i.e., that the will is either determined or random. James gave it elements of both, to establish freedom but preserve responsibility. We show that James was influenced by Darwin’s model of natural selection, as were most recent thinkers with a two-stage model.

Many of James’s contemporaries discussed the problem of human freedom. The seminar will touch on some of them like Charles Sanders Peirce, Dickinson Miller (R. E. Hobart), John Fiske, and the French thinkers Charles Renouvier, Alfred Fouilleé, Henri Bergson, and Henri Poincaré. Seminar participants are encouraged to contribute their thoughts on who either influenced James or were influenced by him.

We celebrate James’s priority in the free will debates by naming the two-stage model – first chance, then choice - “Jamesian” free will.

Biographical Sketch: Bob Doyle holds a Ph.D. in Astrophysics from Harvard. He is currently an Associate in the Harvard Astronomy department, and will be a Visiting Scholar in the Philosophy department for 2010-2011. Bob has spent the past several years working on philosophical problems like epistemology, ethics, and human freedom, based on the creation of information structures in cosmology, biology, and psychology. He reviews the work of over 120 philosophers and 40 scientists on his web site [www.informationphilosopher.com](http://www.informationphilosopher.com). He has established that in 1884 William James was the first of a dozen scientists and philosophers to propose a two-stage model of free will, first spontaneity and then selection - first chance and

then choice, based loosely on Darwinian natural selection. His work on James appears in volume 5 of *William James Studies*, pp.1-28.

**Dan Fellin**, Portland State University, [darkbrown@gmail.com](mailto:darkbrown@gmail.com), [dfellin@gmail.com](mailto:dfellin@gmail.com)

Putting the F back in Philosophy: William James on Why Philosophy is Fun

Abstract: James had his fair share of depression and crisis. But often when reading James' work, one gets the distinct impression of James having not just a good time, but a *great* time. Drawing on letters written by James as an adolescent and young man, as well as James' later inquiries into life and significance, this presentation will explore the joy that James and his correspondents found in reading, writing, and conversing about philosophy.

Biographical Sketch: Daniel Fellin received his BA from Portland State University in 2007. He received his MA from Portland State University in 2010. His thesis was entitled, "The Creation of William James and Pragmatism: 1858-1879."

**Mark Franklin**, [pipcat@comcast.net](mailto:pipcat@comcast.net), Brown University

"The Will to Believe and the Will to Truth"

Abstract: William James is convinced that our desire for truth is more likely to be served if individuals bring their commitments or faiths into the market place of ideas where they can compete with one another and be critically evaluated. What we stand to acquire in the way of deeper and more comprehensive insights into reality may well depend upon our willingness to invest our energies in seeing how certain of our beliefs (e.g., moral and religious) fare when subject to the "total drift" of our thinking and experience. Properly understood, James's celebrated essay The Will to Believe represents a deliberate attempt to expand the scope of inquiry beyond the arbitrary limits imposed upon it by certain practitioners of science (e.g., W. K. Clifford, Thomas Huxley). In its experimental orientation, this often overlooked epistemic dimension of The Will to Believe is continuous with James's more ambitious aim of enhancing the culture of inquiry by placing in circulation interests and energies that some of his contemporaries wished to exile from the intellectual market place.

**Fernando Galindo** [[northumbia@yahoo.com](mailto:northumbia@yahoo.com)], Universidad Nacional de Columbia

"James and the Experience of Belief"

Abstract: Does the Atheism movement nowadays understand the nature of Religion? Do religious movements of today accept the atheist battleground?

In Darwin's time it was already tough, but right now the conflict between Science and Religion has achieved another level. From around the world, in many disciplines, books, articles, and debates rise anew and old arguments circulate from one shore to another, each looking to end this conflict once and for all. For some, the truth must be on one side or the other; for some, the truth lies everywhere. William James's thought has to be in this debate. The main object of this paper is to regard the consequences and scopes of his work about religious experience today.

Biographical Sketch: Fernando Galindo is a lecturer in different subjects, and a teacher, writer, and translator. He works throughout Bogotá, lecturing and promoting philosophy, and literature.

**Tyson-Lord J. Gray** <[tlgrayonline@yahoo.com](mailto:tlgrayonline@yahoo.com)> Vanderbilt University "The Contemporary Relevance of William James Varieties of Religious Experience for Religion and Ecology"

Abstract: In celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of William James, this paper looks at the contemporary effects of his *Varieties of Religions Experience* for religion and ecology.

James' view of religion was an empirically pragmatic one which delayed final judgment of a religion until the "end." Given the current ecological crisis and if there is any validity to Lynn White's article, "The Historical Roots of Ecological Crisis," Christianity is failing that test. This paper therefore asks of James, what is the contemporary "truth" relevant to ecology and how can religion play a substantial role?

**Biographical Sketch:** Tyson-Lord J. Gray is a third-year doctoral student at Vanderbilt University working with Victor Anderson. He completed his master's degree at Boston University where Robert Neville was his advisor for this thesis on John Dewey and William James, and he also took classes with David Lamberth at Harvard Divinity School on the American Pragmatic Tradition. His research interests are in the areas of pragmatism, ecology, law and public policy.

**Roberto Gronda** [roberto.gronda@sns.it], Scuola Normal Superiore, Pisa, Italy  
"Meaning is Use: Dewey's Pragmatic Exploitation of William James's Legacy"

**Abstract:** In *From Absolutism to Experimentalism* (FAE) Dewey recognizes James as the most outstanding influence on his philosophical development. However, scholars have found this statement to contrast with Dewey's criticism of many of James's more significant ideas. I suggest here that so far not enough attention has been paid to the performative significance of Dewey's pledge of allegiance to James. FAE is a philosophical manifesto, whose aim is less to offer a trustworthy depiction of his own intellectual development than to trace back to James his psychologically and biologically oriented pragmatism. Its cash-value, in fact, consists mainly in strengthening and dignifying the Deweyan struggle against subjectivist and logico-epistemological approaches to philosophy spreading in North America at the time.

**Biographical Sketch:** Roberto Gronda received his M.A. degree in philosophy in 2006 from the University of Turin (Italy) with the thesis "Pragmatism and Neo-Pragmatism: two different approaches to habit as the source of normativity." Currently he is a Ph.D student in Philosophy at the Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa (Italy). His main research interests include history of American philosophy, Pragmatism, and the pragmatist account of normativity.

**Susan Gunter** [mailto:[sgunter@westminstercollege.edu](mailto:sgunter@westminstercollege.edu)] Westminster College  
"Alice Gibbens James and William James in Chocorua"

**Abstract:** Alice H. G. and William James's family life at Chocorua is intimately detailed as early as 1887 in an unpublished letter from Alice to her husband, noting plans for the house, the grounds, etc. Their lively, rich summers were not necessarily peaceful ones for the couple, yet they proved productive in terms of their respective projects, his in psychology, philosophy, and farming, and hers in the art of daily life. Their second son Billy married a summer neighbor, daughter Peggy recovered from depression there, and Aleck recovered from his stressful years at school. During her last years, it was Alice's fervent wish that the home never be sold from the family. This paper will detail the acquisition, renovation, and daily routines that evolved at the James's summer home.

**Biographical Sketch:** Susan Gunter is Professor Emeritus of English at Westminster College, Salt Lake City. She is the author of *Alice in Jamesland: The Story of Alice Howe Gibbens James* and editor of two editions of Henry James's letters.

**Richard Hall** [rhall@uncfsu.edu] Fayetteville State University, North Carolina  
"James on the Humanities"

**Abstract:** James' conception of the humanities makes way to restoring them to the center of the curriculum but without compromising other disciplines. He argues that any discipline, even the sciences, qualifies as humanistic if studied historically. The immediate aim of a humanistic education is to acquaint students with the best achievements in all fields so as to emulate, equal and even surpass them. Its ultimate aim is to sharpen students' discernment of real quality wherever and whenever they encounter it, particularly among rival politicians and their policies. James' ideal of a liberal education epitomizes some of his most distinctive philosophical ideas.

**Biographical Sketch:** Richard A. S. Hall received the B.A. in philosophy from Boston University, the M.A. in philosophy from Dalhousie University, and the Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Toronto. He currently is an assistant professor of philosophy at Fayetteville State University, North Carolina. He has authored two books, *The Ethical Foundations of Criminal Justice* and *The Neglected Northampton Texts of Jonathan Edwards: Edwards on Society and Politics* and both edited and contributed to *The Contribution of Jonathan Edwards to American Culture and Society (The Northampton Tercentenary Celebration 1703-2003)*. Hall has also published articles and essays in the areas of the history of American philosophy, aesthetics and the philosophy of art, ethics, and the philosophy of religion.

**J. C. Hallman** [jchallman@gmail.com] University of St. Thomas, St. Paul

“The Moral Equivalent of Paradise: William James and Utopian Thought”

**Abstract:** The standard saw – based on his comments on Chautauqua – is that James found realized utopias dull. Yet Le Guin cites James as radical inspiration, and in 1906 James acknowledged a late-blooming utopianism, drawn from both Charles Fourier and Edward Bellamy. My paper will map a heretofore uncharted trajectory in the evolution of James's thought.

**Biographical Sketch:** J.C. Hallman grew up on a street called Utopia Road. "Utopia Road" is the title of a piece from *The Hospital for Bad Poets*, Hallman's collection of short stories. Hallman eventually realized that neither his utopian heritage nor his interest was fully treated by this story. Thus, he wrote his third nonfiction book, *In Utopia: Six Kinds of Eden and the Search for a Better Paradise*, which St. Martin's Press will publish in August 2010. "The Moral Equivalent of Paradise" builds off Hallman's second book, *The Devil is a Gentleman* (2006), the story of his literary apprenticeship with William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

**Aostre Johnson**, One Winooski Park, Colchester, Vermont 05439: [ajohnson@smcvt.edu](mailto:ajohnson@smcvt.edu)

“James's Concept of Mysticism and its Implications for Education”

**Abstract:** This paper argues that William James's understanding of mysticism is embedded in his ideas about radical empiricism and that James articulates a transformational mystical philosophy with ethics at its core, a "constructivist postmodernism" which bridges premodern spirituality, modern rationality and postmodern pluralism. This mystical worldview holds significant implications for contemporary educational theory and practice. The paper delineates possibilities for why and how Jamesian perspectives might support educational theory and practice in countering the ethical and spiritual poverty of many current approaches.

**Biographical Sketch:** Aostre Johnson is a Professor of Education and coordinator of the master's program curriculum concentration at Saint Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont. Her ongoing focus on the ethical, spiritual and religious dimensions of human development and education began while reading *The Varieties of Religious Experience* in Harvard's William James Hall library many years ago.

**Paul Johnson** [mailto:pjohnson@nd.edu] University of Notre Dame  
“Yankee Yoga and ‘The Razor’s Edge’”

Abstract: This paper presents various ways in which William James’ essay, “The Gospel of Relaxation” shapes Somerset Maugham’s novel *The Razor’s Edge*. *The Razor’s Edge* portrays a spiritual quest, and “New Thought”, attitudes, and virtual quotes from “The Gospel of Relaxation” are incorporated into the novel. In detailing James’ influence (indirectly cited in the novel when the protagonist is found reading *The Principles of Psychology*) the paper will disprove Maugham’s claim that the novel’s protagonist is a real person, but is really a personification of James’ essay.

Biographical Sketch: Paul Johnson is associate professor of music at the University of Notre Dame. His most recent compositions have been recorded by the Kiev Philharmonic. Abstract

**Nobuo Kazashi**, Kobe University “From James to Nishida and Soseki: Two Metamorphoses of the Jamesian Philosophy of ‘Pure Experience’ in Modern Japanese Thought”

Abstract: The works of Kitaro Nishida and Soseki Natsume represent the endeavors of modern Japanese intellectuals to establish their own autonomous stances in the face of the overwhelming influx of Western culture and sciences. Interestingly, however, it was in James’s radical empiricism that both of them found a major source of inspiration for their groundbreaking works in philosophy and literature respectively. We shed a new light on the problems regarding the formation of the “self” in modern Japan by bringing into contrast the distinctive ways in which Nishida and Natsume responded to the Jamesian notion of “pure experience.”

Biographical Sketch: Nobuo Kazashi received his Ph.D. in philosophy from Yale University, and has recently served as a visiting scholar at Harvard University 2007-2008. His main fields of interest are contemporary continental philosophy, phenomenology, pragmatism, modern Japanese thought, and peace studies. He received the 6<sup>th</sup> William James Prize from the American Philosophical Association.

**Ezekiel Kimball** [mailto:ewk124@psu.edu] Pennsylvania State University

” ‘Old Truth’ and ‘New Fact’ at Harvard: The Pragmatic Relationship of James & Eliot”

Abstract: In William James and Charles Eliot, Harvard employed two of the leading public intellectuals writing and lecturing about American education during the dawn of the university age. Although they were often in conflict, this presentation will suggest that a shared respect enabled both James and Eliot to use the other’s thoughts to refine their own. Drawing upon the public records of both men as well as recent scholarly biographies, this paper extends Veysey’s analysis of the pair’s relative roles in the creation of the modern American university culture—a subject on which James would otherwise seem to have often deferred to Eliot.

Biographical Sketch: Ezekiel Kimball is a PhD candidate in the Higher Education Program at Penn State studying the history of higher education with an emphasis on the process of mission differentiation among various types of institutions and a secondary interest in ethical issues in higher education. As a masters student, he studied James’ work through the lens of adult learning theory and experiential learning. He has also presented his research on pragmatism as it relates to student development and assessment in higher education.

**Renato Kinouchi**, [renato.kinouchi@gmail.com] Universidade Federal do ABC (Santo Andre, São Bernardo e São Caetano), Brazil “Does Consciousness Still Exist?”

Abstract: This paper intends to evaluate James's original contributions and his pervasive influence on consciousness studies. Initially, we examine the "automaton theory" and the Jamesian counter-argument that consciousness was selected during evolution because it would increase the performance of the neural apparatus. Then, we analyze his claims that the behavior of organisms involves purposes and that purposive behavior can be explained in terms of variation and selection. Finally, we evaluate James's influence on contemporary theories of consciousness, showing how his ideas become a source of inspiration for those who face such a centenary and unsolved philosophical question. Keywords include the Mind-body Problem, Evolution, Intentionality, and Consciousness.

Biographical Sketch: Renato Rodrigues Kinouchi, PhD, teaches Epistemology and Philosophy of Science at *Universidade Federal do ABC*, Brazil. He is leader of the research group "Interdisciplinary Studies on Philosophy, History, and Science Education" and coordinator of UFABC Ethics Research Committee.

**Amy Kittelstrom**, Sonoma State University: [kitt@sonoma.edu](mailto:kitt@sonoma.edu); [akittels@princeton.edu](mailto:akittels@princeton.edu);  
"William James and Liberal Religion: The Context Hidden in Plain Sight"

Abstract: In the summer of 1903, when William James was making his customary trip to the Adirondack mountains of New York, he was put up for the night in someone's home, where his hostess showered him with graciousness and exclaimed, "I feel like the country lady whose pastor was visiting her. When he protested against her sweetening his tea with molasses, she only poured in more, and said 'If I were to fill the cup with it, it wouldn't be good enough for you.'"

This tidbit indicates two important aspects of James's place in American history. First, his impact on relatively ordinary people was not only as great as his impact in the circles of professional philosophers, it was more like the character of a minister than that of an academic. What was it about James's work that would have made this woman feel his presence such an honor? The first part of this paper will examine how the talks James gave at colleges, religious associations, and summer schools in the 1890s spoke to practical questions of what the moral life was and how it should be lived, and how this fit into popular audiences' expectations of how ministers and public intellectuals served their needs.

Second, the Adirondack mountains not only drew James himself, but these and similar venues in late nineteenth-century Boston, Plymouth, and Concord—and Chocorua, New Hampshire—were magnets for other thinkers like James who operated right on the edge where Christianity left off and secular humanism began. The second part of this talk will explore the liberal religious context that nurtured the young, vocationless James of the 1870s and provided platforms and intellectual community for the more confident, established Harvard professor then in the process of developing pragmatism, radical empiricism, and the other philosophical innovations that comprised his formal academic contribution to the history of American ideas.

Biographical Sketch: Amy Kittelstrom is a historian of modern thought and culture who specializes in nineteenth-century American thinkers and their contexts. She is particularly interested in the lived intellectual connections between individuals and cultures of the past, how their ideas on religion and democracy informed one another, and how Americans engaged with the intellectual productions of India, Great Britain, and the Romantic movement. Her research focuses on American liberal religion, pragmatism, modern science, professionalization, and the concept of pluralism. She has published articles and reviews in the *Journal of American History*, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *Religion and American Culture*, *William James Studies*, *Reviews in American History*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and she is

working on her first book, [The Religion of Democracy: The American Reformation and the Making of Modern Liberalism](#). Past fellow of the Center for Religion and American Life at Yale University, the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History at Harvard University, and the Center for the Study of Religion at Princeton University, Kittelstrom received her PhD in History in 2004 from Boston University and her BA in American Studies in 1994 from Rice University. She is an assistant professor of American History at Sonoma State University.

**James Kloppenberg**, [jkloppen@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:jkloppen@fas.harvard.edu), Harvard University: "What Makes William James Significant?"

Abstract: William James was a philosopher who could reach a wide audience in the public and the classroom. The essays in TALKS TO TEACHERS and "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" showcase why students have found James so satisfying.

Biographical Sketch: James T. Kloppenberg is Charles Warren Professor of American History and Chair of the History Department at Harvard University, where he often teaches a lecture course on American social thought that traces the influence of pragmatism since the late nineteenth century to the present and a seminar entitled The World of William James. He has written extensively on James, pragmatism, and American intellectual history, including UNCERTAIN VICTORY: SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND PROGRESSIVISM IN EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN THOUGHT, 1870-1921 (Oxford, 1986), A COMPANION TO AMERICAN THOUGHT (Blackwell, 1995), THE VIRTUES OF LIBERALISM (Oxford, 1998), and READING OBAMA: DREAMS, HOPE, AND THE AMERICAN POLITICAL TRADITION (Princeton, forthcoming in October, 2010).

**Myles K. Leighton**, [myleigh@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:myleigh@fas.harvard.edu), Harvard University

“Standardized Measures in Psychological Research: Updated James Model for Detecting Causal Source of Agency.”

Abstract: In 1909, William James published “The Report on Mrs. Piper’s Hodgson Control” in The Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research. In it contained a 7-point model for evaluating the causal source of information coming forth from the medium which was commonly perceived by observers as a discarnate person, and others as a natural source, such as the medium herself. In the last one hundred years, the spiritistic debate continues. Findings in psychical research, now known as paranormal psychology, are often met with polemic debate or sardonic dismissal in the field of psychology. One of the central challenges to paranormal researchers in gaining acceptance of their findings is the lack of the use of standardized tools. Specifically, standardized measures accepted by researchers in the field of psychology, not just parapsychology. In this paper, I modernize James’s 7-point model with the latest and most standard measures appropriate for decoding casual source of agency. It is expected that if a paranormal investigator uses this model without inferring into it, their findings will be much more appreciable by psychologists in other branches of the field, thus ending many debates and speculations regardless of the results.

Biographical Sketch: Myles Leighton is the Innovation Director at Bank Depot, and author of its patents. He investigates subconscious perception and online consumer behavior at Harvard University.

**Jared Lobdell**, [jaredlobdell@comcast.net](mailto:jaredlobdell@comcast.net), “William James and Alcoholics Anonymous”

Abstract: The [co-]founder of AA, Bill W., acknowledged William James as a founder or founding influence: Bill was given a copy of The Varieties in 1934/35 by F. Shepard Cornell, a member of the Oxford Groups and cousin and associate of Carl Jung's patient Rowland Hazard III, and Bill built some of the infrastructure of AA on James, so much so that early AA members joked that they were the James Club (William James and the Epistle of St James). Carl Jung's 1961 letter to Bill W. shows the impact of the criticism of James at the 1909 Clark Symposium, and in many ways both Jung and Bill W. (and Rowland Hazard) were significantly influenced by WJ – and might in some senses be considered heirs. The presentation will follow through to cover James's significance in AA for all the years 1935-2010.

Biographical Sketch: Jared Lobdell is the author of This Strange Illness: Alcoholism and Bill W (Aldine 2004).

**Arthur Lothstein**, [lothsetin@optonline.net](mailto:lothsetin@optonline.net), Long Island University “Gerunds of the Errand, or The Moment of Transition: Emerson, James, and Radical Empiricism”

Abstract: In the first part of this essay, I isolate a strand in Emerson's multi-stranded writing, which I identify as inchoately and presciently radically empirical. Although I do not make the full case for Emerson's forerunning of James's radical empiricism, I do offer a charcoal sketch of what such a full case would entail. I juxtapose key texts from Emerson and James, specifically on the crucial subject of relations, and especially on the central relation of “continuous transition,” noting that both Emerson and James jettisoned the traditional empiricistic notion of experience as diced or granulated in atomic sensory discreta (what James and Emerson negatively and respectively troped as a “brickbat plan of construction” and “a lumber room of miscellaneous plurals”).

In the second part of this essay, I discuss James's critical inheritance of Emerson's embryonic radical empiricism. Twice in his life, James read all of Emerson (minus, of course, his journals, which were published after James's death), the second time in preparation for his Address at the Emerson bicentenary in Concord in 1903. His underlinings and notations make tolerably clear that he had little or no use for the monistic idealist strand in Emerson, but drew sustenance from his radical empirical and pragmatic strands. It is important to note here that the “explosion” in James's thought (1904-5), in which he wrote the two anchoring and other six essays of his posthumously published radical empiricism, came on the heels of his prolific reading of Emerson just one year prior. It is not surprising, then, that we find Emerson's fingerprints all over the radical empiricism.

I next address James's oft-asserted claim of the logical separability of his pragmatism and radical empiricism, offering considerable textual support of my (and John J. McDermott's) claim of their intertwining and mutual fecundation. I call attention here to the radical empirical language that runs through *Pragmatism*, problematizing the prevailing view of the latter as simply or essentially epistemological. I also note that James and others, including John Dewey, often conflated the languages of radical empiricism and pragmatism in speaking about his philosophy.

In the last part of the essay, I address generally the notion of relations in Emerson and James, and specifically their relational concepts of self-becoming. I argue that their relationism belies any reading of their respective notions of the subjective self as insular or claustral, as concave or narcissistic. If their tropings of the subjective self are “tinged” with bourgeois

elements, they are not consonant or coterminous with the possessive and “ragged” individualism, “retraction into self,” “refugee idealism,” and “inner-worldly asceticism” that John Dewey, Herbert Marcuse and others have associated with bourgeois individualism.

\* For more information, especially regarding a deleted section, on “James, Impressionism, Cezanne and Radical Empiricism,” please contact me.

Biographical Sketch: Most recent publications of note: *New Morning: Emerson in the 21st Century*, edited with Michael Brodrick (Vanderbilt), SUNY, 2008. Includes original essays by Douglas R. Anderson, Lawrence Buell, Len Gougeon, David LaRocca, John Lysaker, David Marr, and myself (“Teaching for Lustres: An Essay on the Emersonian Teacher.” The book also includes a rare letter of Emerson’s to a young girl Lucia, and reprinted essays by John J. McDermott, Robert C. Pollock, Mary Oliver, and Ann Lauterbach. The essays are interleaved with poems by Deborah Digges, Dorene Evans, William Heyen, Paul Hoover, Gary Snyder, and Mark Strand.

My essay has been fattened into a book-length manuscript, which I am now editing for publication. I am also editing for publication another book-length manuscript, “The Emersonian Moment,” the first draft of which I finished last summer. See also my contribution to the *Festschrift* for John J. McDermott in *Experience as Philosophy of Culture: On the Work of John J. McDermott*, Edited by James Campbell and Richard W. Hart, Fordham University Press, 2006. The title of my essay is “No Eros, No Buds: Teaching as Nectaring.”

**Lee McBride** [LMcBride@wooster.edu], The College of Wooster  
“William James and Weak Moral Objectivism”

Abstract: Many argue that William James was first and foremost a moralist. It is thought that James was ultimately motivated by moral considerations; that his entire philosophy could be considered an ethics. It seems ironic, then, that James, the moralist, vehemently rejects traditional moral theories and promotes what, on many accounts, appears to be a form of moral relativism. In this paper, I outline James’ rejection of absolutism and argue that the Jamesian ethical ethos can incorporate universally valid *prima facie* principles or functional value imperatives, and, thus, can be considered a *weak* form of moral objectivism rather than moral relativism.

Biographical Sketch: Lee McBride received his Ph.D. in philosophy from Purdue University in 2006. His current research focuses on pragmatist ethics, philosophy of race, and feminism.

**James Pawelski**, [pawelski@psych.upenn.edu](mailto:pawelski@psych.upenn.edu), University of Pennsylvania “Beyond Healthy-Mindedness: William James, Positive Psychology and the Science of Well-Being”

Abstract: In his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James made a famous distinction between healthy-mindedness (the view that evil can be overcome and done away with) and morbid-mindedness (the view that evil is an essential part of life). While he admitted that the healthy-minded view is limited in that it ignores certain parts of reality, he also had a deep respect for it because it leads to so many healthy psychological and physical outcomes. James later argued, in the “Energies of Men,” for the founding of a branch of rigorous empirical psychology to study healthy-mindedness scientifically. His own work in psychology, philosophy, and religious studies was already a great contribution to this envisioned branch of psychology. Still, it would be nearly 100 years before psychologists fully answered James’s call, with the founding of positive psychology just over a decade ago. This presentation will show how some of the topics James addressed in his work have been taken up in the field of positive

psychology—and the broader science of well-being—and will explore key lessons this science needs to learn from James’s work.

**Biographical Sketch:** James O. Pawelski, Ph.D. is Director of Education and Senior Scholar in Positive Psychology and Adjunct Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Having earned a Ph.D. in philosophy, he is the author of *The Dynamic Individualism of William James*, and his current research interests include the philosophical underpinnings of positive psychology (his first article on William James and positive psychology appeared in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* in 2003); the development, application, and assessment of interventions in positive psychology; and the interplay between positive psychology and the various disciplines in the arts and humanities. He has given numerous talks on William James and positive psychology at a variety of academic conferences. He is a member of the Advisory Board of the Ernest L. Boyer Center, and of the Editorial Boards of *William James Studies*, *International Coaching Psychology Review*, and the *Journal of Positive Psychology*. Dr. Pawelski is the founding director of the first degree program in the world on positive psychology: the Master of Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) Program at the University of Pennsylvania. Along with Martin Seligman (founder of the field of positive psychology), he is one of the program’s principal faculty, teaching courses on positive interventions, and integrating James into the curriculum. He has also co-taught a graduate seminar on James in the Religious Studies Department at Penn. In addition, he is the founding Executive Director of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) and a charter member of the Board of Directors of that organization.

**Alexandra Pleshoyano** [Alexandra.Pleshoyano@USherbrooke.ca] University of Sherbrooke, Quebec, “William James’s Varieties of ‘Spiritual’ Experience”

**Abstract:** For the purpose of his “Gifford Lectures” (1901-1902), William James marked clearly what he meant by the word ‘religious’: “On the one side of it lies institutional, on the other personal religion” (James: 1997, 41). James was strictly interested by the latter. Nowadays many would define James’s *Varieties of Religious Experience* as spiritual but not religious. Many people tend to identify spirituality as an individual and secular matter giving prominence to the personal experience. My intention here is to argue how James’s reflections are relevant and do indeed contribute for today’s interfaith dialogue in a world of globalization.

**Biographical Sketch:** Alexandra Pleshoyano is an associate Professor at the University of Sherbrooke in Quebec, Canada. Author of *Etty Hillesum: l’amour comme ‘seule solution’*. *Une herméneutique théologique au coeur du mal*, Münster, Lit Verlag, 2007 and *J’avais encore mille choses à te demander. L’univers spirituel d’Etty Hillesum*, Montreal/Paris, Novalis/Bayard, 2009, she has also published many articles both in French and in English.

**Jacob Risinger** [risinger@fas.harvard.edu], Harvard University

“William James, Romanticism, and the Varieties of Environmental Experience”

**Abstract:** What significance can our individual apprehensions of and attachment to nature have in a warming world whose survival is dependent on the science of systems? Recent work by Bruno Latour and Alan Weisman has entertained the fantasy of a nonhuman nature divested of the ideologies and imaginations imposed upon it by the human estate, and the literary critic Timothy Morton has asserted that true ecology necessitates the abandonment of a romantic or fetishized “Nature.” For all the merits of this pragmatic or “down-to-earth” approach, it glosses

over the recalcitrant contradiction that our macrocosmic perceptions of the world and its patterns tend to exist dialectically with our more personal, subjective experiences of its nature.

In this paper, I make a case for the continued relevance of our individualized experiences of nature by considering William James, an essentially ecological thinker who approached subjective experience as foundational to an explanation of our life in the world. In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James suggested that “the practical real world for each of us” involves a synthesis of “physical facts and emotional values in indistinguishable combination.” The analysis of relational realms like religions and ecosystems necessitates, for James, fidelity to the private experience of solitary individuals. I approach James as a crucial mediating figure between an age obsessed with romantic nature and the emergence of twentieth-century science, suggesting in the process that he offers a model for how we might look towards our literature in beginning to sketch “the varieties of environmental experience.” The stakes of such an understanding are high; James himself recognized that “mankind is in a position similar to that of a set of people living on a frozen lake, surrounded by cliffs over which there is no escape, yet knowing that little by little the ice is melting, and the inevitable day drawing near when the last film of it will disappear, and to be drowned ignominiously will be the human creature’s portion.”

Biographical Sketch: Jacob Risinger is a PhD student in English at Harvard University, where he's working towards a dissertation on British Romanticism and its various permutations.

**Robert Richardson**, [rrichardson@aol.com](mailto:rrichardson@aol.com), Independent Scholar

“Will You or Won’t You Have It So?: James on the Will”

Abstract: James called habit “the enormous flywheel of society,” to be opposed, if at all, only by voluntary effort, and he understood that will--willing--is the key to such voluntary life as we have. James’ modern and science-based understanding of the will still works.

Biographical sketch: Robert Richardson is an independent scholar who has taught at many universities and has written intellectual biographies of Thoreau, Emerson, and William James.

**Tadd L Ruetenik** [<mailto:rueteniktaddl@sau.edu>] St. Ambrose University

“The Book of James: Pragmatism and the Research of Gary Schwartz?”

Abstract: Contemporary psychologist Gary Schwartz is the new William James. Much like James, he has an arts background, was converted into science, was schooled at Harvard, and studied spirit communication. He has done controlled investigations of mediums such as John Edward and Allison DuBois, who is the new Leonora Piper. In what follows, the work of Schwartz is explained, with reference to the philosophy of James, which influenced it. Schwartz’ work has the same challenges that James’ did, namely the fact that such research involves accommodating some shady characters, and tolerating some unclear but compelling experiences. In short, it involves charity over criticism, latitude of interpretation, and a degree of emotionality in science. These are precisely the things that make skeptics cringe, and both James and Schwartz are thus among the underdogs of science. As someone who appreciates the work of the underdog, I will try to defend these people.

Biographical Sketch: Tadd Ruetenik, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at St. Ambrose University, has published articles on James’ religious philosophy in *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, and *Journal of Religion and Health*. An active participant in conferences for the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, he has presented on such topics as James’ scholarly treatment of medieval women

mystics, his thoughts on animal welfare, and the connection between warlike aggression and alcohol addiction.

**Linda Simon**, [Lsimon@skidmore.edu](mailto:Lsimon@skidmore.edu), Guest Curator, "Life is in the Transitions," the William James Centennial Exhibition, Houghton Library, Harvard College

Abstract: Drawing upon its vast archives of letters, manuscripts, photographs, and diaries, Houghton Library commemorates William James's life and work with an exhibition of more than sixty items. This exhibition focuses on the transitional moments of James's personal and professional life, when he made decisions about his vocation, education, profession, and marriage--decisions made under great stress and tension. With manuscripts and letters referring to his major works, the exhibition also illuminates his intellectual interests in religion, psychology, psychical research, and philosophy. The exhibition is both a celebration of James's legacy to us, and an introduction to this great American thinker and writer.

Biographical Sketch: Linda Simon is the author of *GENUINE REALITY: A LIFE OF WILLIAM JAMES*, editor of *WILLIAM JAMES REMEMBERED*, and General Editor of the online journal *WILLIAM JAMES STUDIES*. She is Professor of English at Skidmore College.

**John Snarey** [[jsnarey@emory.edu](mailto:jsnarey@emory.edu)], Emory University

“All Unplanned for and Unexpected”: William James on the Nature of Religious Experiences”

Abstract: Encountering or being surprised by the beauties of nature may facilitate a mystic-like encounter with an unseen reality. This paper focuses on William James's sensitivity to nature as a trigger of religious experiences.

Biographical Sketch: Dr. John Snarey is Professor of Human Development and Ethics at Emory University where he teaches in the School of Theology and the Department of Psychology. His annual “William James Seminar” is a favorite of students. Professor Snarey is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association.

**Flavia Stara**, [fstara@libero.it](mailto:fstara@libero.it), Flavia Stara, University of Macerata, Italy

“Reading William James: Educating for Moral Insight and Values”

Abstract: The paper reconstructs the concept of “feeling” elaborated by William James as a mean towards a moral education. The analysis of the feeling is structurally connected in James's thought, not only with the problem of the conscience and the knowledge of the self, but also with the strategically wider issue of “a study of the human nature.” This perspective serves to underline the “therapeutic” function of moral emotions in the analysis of experience, as well as their specific impact both on the process of formation and the behavior of the human being, and on the construction of democracy.

Biographical Sketch: Flavia Stara is a Full PROFESSOR IN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION (2006), at the School of Education of the University of Macerata (Italy). She holds a PH.D. IN ROMANCE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES from Harvard University, a MASTERS IN ROMANCE LITERATURES FROM Boston College, and a LAUREA IN PHILOSOPHY FROM the University of L'Aquila. Her specialties include Twentieth-century history of Philosophy of Education, American Pragmatism, William James' thought and works, the History of Literary Theory, and Language Pedagogy

**Miriam Strube** [[miriam.strube@uni-paderborn.de](mailto:miriam.strube@uni-paderborn.de)] Paderborn University “Racing Pragmatism”

Abstract: The history of pragmatism is seen as a white-dominated discourse. However, a revision of pragmatist philosophy shows that several twentieth-century black intellectuals are major

pragmatists. W.E.B. DuBois and Alain Locke incorporate Jamesian thinking, a modification later having an impact on John Dewey. Thus, instead of looking at one-sided influences, I explore the dialogical exchange and the multi-layered role of these thinkers and the changes they made for their own theories and politics. Furthermore, I argue that James' pragmatism is still highly relevant in current 'race' theories such as Paula Moya's postpositivist realist approach, and could serve as a constructive approach in today's post-post-debates.

**Biographical Sketch:** Miriam Strube is Associate Professor of American Studies at Paderborn University, Germany. She has studied at Bochum University and New York University. As part of her Ph.D. studies, she had a scholarship for Columbia University and was a Fulbright scholar in Washington D.C.. For her current book project on pragmatism and modernist culture, she has received a prize to do research at Princeton University. She is presently organizing a German conference in honor of William James, "Revisioning Pragmatism: William James in the New Millennium," sponsored by the German Research Foundation and the German Association for American Studies.

**Eugene Taylor**, PhD, Saybrook University, Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Cambridge Institute of Psychology and Comparative Religions, [etaylor@igc.org](mailto:etaylor@igc.org)  
"William James and Contemporary Neurophenomenology"

**Abstract:** William James was a man 150 years ahead of his time; meaning, he is still beyond us even today. At the end of his life in 1910 he enjoined science to "study the fall of the threshold of consciousness, though we may not understand what we are looking at either in this generation or the next." Contemporary neuroscience is only now beginning to awaken to James's metaphysics, particularly his radical empiricism, as central to addressing the so-called Hard Problem--the relation between the brain and the mind. Consider the fact that James appears in the "biochemical theology" of Francis Crick, Barnard Baars's Global Workspace Theory, Antonio Damasio's interpretation of emotion, and Francesco Varela's neurophenomenology based on the enactive approach. James's ideas, in my opinion even more far reaching than these investigators, point to applications that may lead not only to a restructuring of the way psychology is viewed in the hierarchy of the sciences, but also to the potential transformation of science itself.

**Biographical Sketch:** Eugene Taylor holds the AB and MA in experimental psychology and Asian studies and the PhD in the History and Philosophy of Psychology. Working in James's unpublished manuscript collection at Harvard for the past thirty years, he is the author of William James on Exceptional Mental States (1982); William James on Consciousness beyond the Margin (1996); with Robert Wozniak (eds) Pure Experience: The Response to William James (1996); and forthcoming, William James and the Spiritual Roots of American Pragmatism. His most current book is The Mystery of Personality: A History of Psychodynamic Theories (2009). Currently, he is Professor of Psychology at Saybrook University; Lecturer on Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School; a Senior Psychologist on the Psychiatry Service at the Massachusetts General Hospital; and Director of the Cambridge Institute of Psychology and Comparative Religions.

**Trygve Throntveit** [throntv@fas.harvard.edu], Harvard University  
"William James, Barack Obama, and the American Deliberative Tradition"

**Abstract:** This paper historicizes debates over President Obama's "pragmatism" by comparing his ideas to those of William James, and revealing their shared political ethics: deliberative, experimental, morally courageous, yet alert to the irony of human endeavors. Ideologues left and

right ignore this higher pragmatism, yet it helps explain the enthusiasm Obama has generated among Americans tired of overheated and sterile political discourse. Whether Obama's record fulfills his rhetoric remains uncertain. But Americans' hesitant embrace of an anti-ideological politics viewing both idealism and fallibility as preconditions of progress is important—as is recognizing the vibrancy of similar traditions in the past.

**Biographical Sketch:** Trygve Throntveit is Lecturer and Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies in History at Harvard University, where he received his PhD in History in 2008. Dr. Throntveit has published several articles and book chapters on the intellectual and cultural history of American domestic and foreign politics. He was awarded the William James Society's Graduate Essay prize in 2004 for his article, "Numbered Among the Jameses: The Ralph Waldo Emerson Centenary Address," and his article "William James's Ethical Republic" was recently accepted for publication in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*. He is currently writing a book on the pragmatist origins and cultural impact of Woodrow Wilson's internationalist politics.

**Deborah Whitehead, [Deborah.Whitehead@Colorado.EDU](mailto:Deborah.Whitehead@Colorado.EDU), University of Colorado, Boulder**  
“James’s Middle Way: Beyond Pragmatism”

**Abstract:** William James's formulation of pragmatism as a *via media*, a “middle way” between facts and values, science and religion, and a way of solving metaphysical disputes, is well known. Curiously, however, while James largely abandons this conception of pragmatism midway through his book *Pragmatism*, such a “middle way” formulation of pragmatism has remained quite influential. I suggest that we can read this notion of pragmatism as a “middle way” back into the tradition itself, not so much to see how pragmatism helps us to resolve “otherwise interminable disputes,” but rather, in order to see how pragmatism has been so often constructed as a kind of mediating discourse between various orientations and shifts in philosophy, religion and American culture.

**Biographical Sketch:** I am assistant professor of religious studies at the University of Colorado in Boulder, where I have been teaching since 2007. I teach courses in U.S. religions, the Christian tradition, gender and religion, Christianity and American culture, and critical-theoretical approaches to religion, gender, and culture. I am currently working on a book manuscript based on research undertaken for my doctorate in consultation with my committee at Harvard, composed of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, David Lamberth, Francis Fiorenza, and James T. Kloppenberg. My background and training in philosophy, critical theory, cultural studies, gender and feminist studies all situate and inform my work as a scholar of religious studies. My work on American pragmatism grew out of these interests as I sought to think critically about what factors might help to explain, situate, and contextualize the emergence of pragmatism in both the post-Civil War/Progressive Era context and today, and what an examination of pragmatism in more direct relation to its cultural contexts might suggest about why it remains America’s “perennial philosophy.”

**Kevin Zdiara, [kevin.zdiara@uni-erfurt.de](mailto:kevin.zdiara@uni-erfurt.de), Max Weber Center for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies**  
“Horace M. Kallen and the Legacy of William James”

**Abstract:** Despite the recent interest in Pragmatism and William James, Horace Meyer Kallen (1882-1974) is one of the few thinkers who have been omitted from anthologization. This is particularly astonishing since Kallen was a student and assistant of William James and the co-editor of James’s posthumous work *Some Problems of Philosophy*.

Horace Kallen coined the term ‘cultural pluralism’ in the 1920s, and ‘secularism’ in the 1950s for two ways of orchestrating different ethnic, political and religious backgrounds without abolishing the differences. These ideas can be directly traced back to James’s influence and his appreciation of both the individual and pluralism. Besides defending the freedom of the individual in his philosophy, Kallen was also a public intellectual who promoted a pluralistic Judaism, fought totalitarianism and championed civil rights.

In my paper, I want to present this forgotten thinker of pragmatism, and point to his merits and his relevance for the study of William James’s pragmatism. A special focus will be put on Kallen’s indebtedness and commitment to James’s philosophy and his unique application of it to contemporary sociopolitical questions.

Biographical Sketch: Kevin Zdiara holds an M.A. in Philosophy from Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf. Since the Winter of 2008, he has been a doctoral student at Max Weber Center for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies, and he is currently working on a dissertation about Horace M. Kallen, a student of James.

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