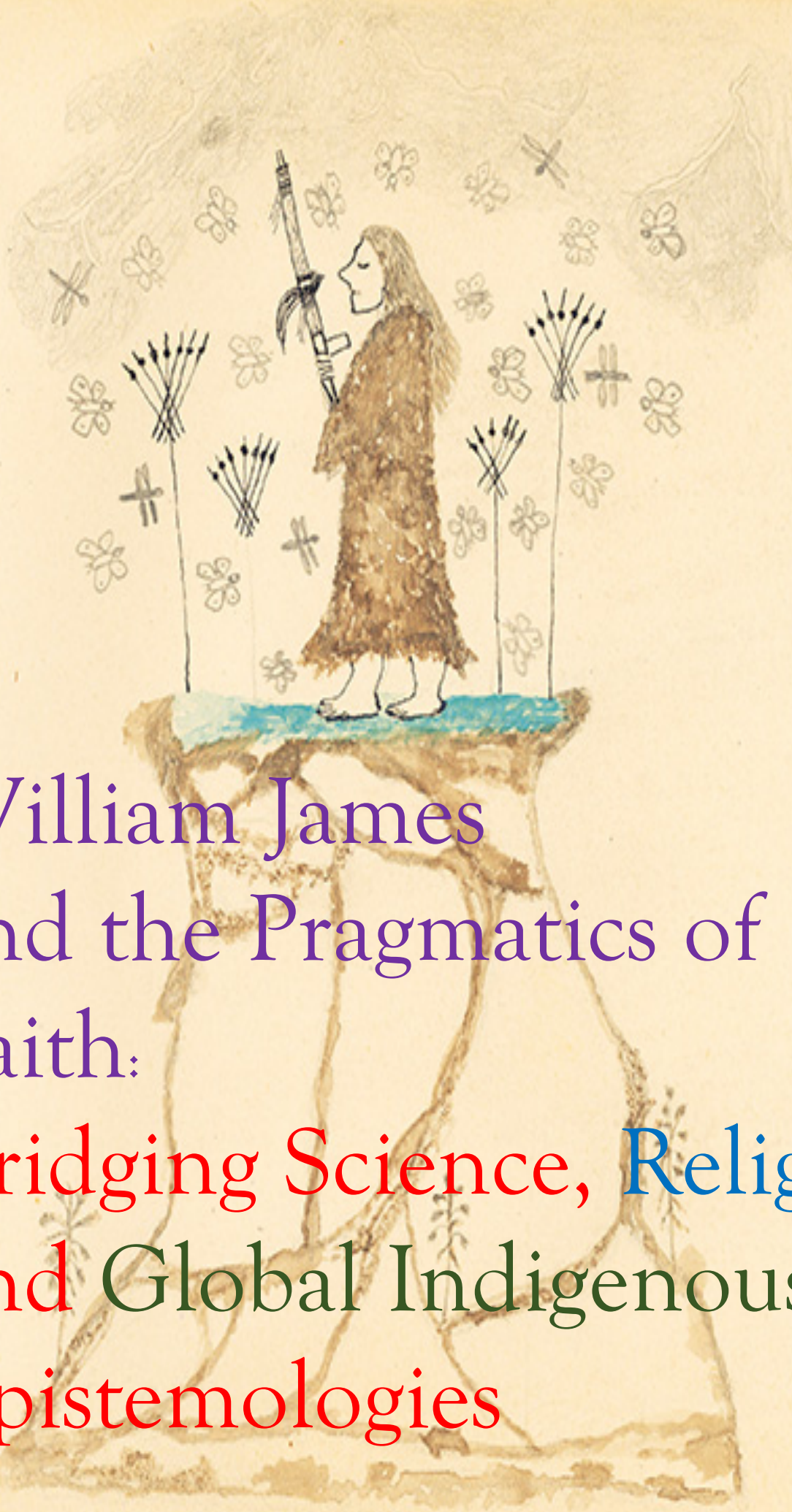

William James and the Pragmatics of Faith: Bridging Science, Religion and Global Indigenous Epistemologies

religions

MDPI

Article

William James and the Pragmatics of Faith: Bridging Science, Religion and Global Indigenous Epistemologies

Matthew Crippen

Department of Global Studies, Pusan National University, Busan 46241, Republic of Korea; matthewjcrippen@gmail.com

Abstract

This article examines William James's philosophy of science through his pragmatic response to epistemic fallibilism, emphasizing how actionability rather than evidential certainty underwrites both scientific and religious practices. While James explicitly drew comparisons between science and Abrahamic scriptures, my account highlights resonances with non-Western traditions, particularly Indigenous American and Asian epistemologies, also situating some of James's philosophical motivations within his biography. James may have indirectly absorbed Asian religious and philosophical teachings from American Transcendentalists who engaged with them, and he may have encountered Amerindian perspectives through the cultural milieu of the United States or during his Amazonian expedition. In either case, threads within these global Indigenous traditions align with the weight that James's work gives to contextual, agent-relative forms of knowing that are inseparable from action. I conclude by discussing how James's ideas support an account of animism that integrates Amerindian thought with the extended mind thesis. I also detail how his pluralistic account of experience and reality creates conceptual space for the co-existence of science and spirituality, ironically by undermining the assumption that the two operate according to radically distinct epistemologies. Throughout the article, I connect James's thought to more recent debates in religion and metaphysics.

Keywords: Animism and the Extended Mind Thesis; Contextual Knowledge and Epistemic Pluralism; Faith and Religion; Indigenous American and Asian Philosophy; James and Pragmatism; Non-Western Thought; Philosophy of Science; Radical Empiricism; American Transcendentalism; Value Theory

Academic Editor: Hans Zollner

Received: 26 June 2025
Revised: 12 August 2025
Accepted: 24 August 2025
Published: 28 August 2025

Citation: Crippen, Matthew. 2025. William James and the Pragmatics of Faith: Bridging Science, Religion and Global Indigenous Epistemologies. *Religions* 16: 1116. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16091116

1. Introduction

Scientific success is such that even skeptics fly on planes and use sunscreen. It is no surprise, then, that scientists bristle at claims that their work reflects religious tendencies. James (1882, 1895a, 1907) made such claims—not to undermine science, but to highlight the role of non-evidential standards in navigating a fallibilistic landscape where data alone cannot confirm a theory. His comparisons between science and religion sometimes invoked the Christian Bible. Less noted is how James's thinking aligned with non-Western spiritual traditions. This was perhaps unintentional yet probably not coincidental, since scholars have shown that Indigenous traditions from South and East Asia influenced US intellectuals, including James's godfather, Ralph Waldo Emerson (e.g., Wang 2021; Crippen 2023b). Others argue that Indigenous American thought shaped US philosophy (Wilshire 2000; Pratt 2002; Mann 2005). This article examines Western and non-Western religious threads in James's philosophy of science.

My account begins with an overview of James's life. Here, I touch upon where he may have absorbed global Indigenous influences—for example, Amerindian ideas from his Amazonian expedition or Asian philosophies discussed by his predecessors in American Transcendentalism. I also highlight his struggle with decision-making—a challenge linked to his fallibilist conviction that no amount of evidence definitively proves a theory. His fallibilism tied to his critique of British empiricists who, in his view, oversimplified experience by reducing it to isolated data points. Their approach led them to adopt a correspondence theory of truth, which holds that a mental model is correct only if it matches real-world patterns. But James argued that this standard was flawed since multiple, even contradictory theories can align with the same data. Additionally, human actions change what data appear. In response, his later pragmatic philosophy sought criteria for choosing between beliefs when evidence alone is insufficient—which, for James, was always the case to some degree.

These evidential challenges and the pragmatic philosophy that arose in response relate to James's (1882, 1890a, 1890b, 1897) claim that a belief and its strength are defined by a person's willingness to act. Actions yield real outcomes—supporting or disconfirming the belief—and sometimes evidence emerges because one takes a leap of faith. This idea resonates with Abrahamic traditions, where uncertain rewards follow from faithful actions (e.g., Gen. 22:1–19; Exod. 3:1–14:31). Echoing David Hume but avoiding his skepticism, James (1890b, Ch. 28) listed metaphysical assumptions about causality and lawful uniformity as examples of faith in the secular realm, noting that most scientists accept them despite their indemonstrability. He argued that such principles help build reality—for instance, by sustaining scientists through failed trials or by supplying schemata that make the world intelligible.

Still, James (1897, pp. 447–52) warned of a danger: unrecognized faith can foster "half-way empiricism," where beliefs persist not because of evidence but despite it. A case in point is W. K. Clifford. His commitment to empirically justifying mathematical continuity led him to endorse the now-defunct ether theory (Petrunić 2009). This is ironic, since Clifford (1877, p. 295) insisted it is "wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence"—a view James rejected as unobtainable and hopelessly vague. Ironically, Clifford's unwitting faith in continuity equated to halfway empiricism. His stance also finds a curious mirror image in certain religious circles, as when fundamentalists defend young Earth creationism—for instance, by claiming that God planted overwhelming contradictory evidence as a test of faith. Such a rationalization is at odds with James's epistemological standards, not least because acting on it is likely to generate significant friction. This is potentially to the point of unactionability when introduced among educated peers in the broader community.

In short, James's pragmatic epistemology challenged dogmatic rigidity on the basis that unacknowledged faith can distort inquiry in both religious and scientific domains. This opens the door to broader philosophical comparisons. Specifically, James critiqued British empiricism for neglecting the role of action and interest in shaping knowledge, with his alternative framework stressing relational, context-sensitive and experience-generating practices, echoing a variety of global Indigenous standpoints.

Those familiar with Indigenous traditions from Asia, the Americas, Africa and beyond appreciate that they cannot be collapsed into one another. Yet some of these outlooks may intersect modestly through ancient Silk and Spice Route exchanges (Reid 1994), and many of them share the view that reality is relational—a theme represented in James's pragmatic idea that observable qualities emerge through action. Indigenous perspectives from the aforementioned regions frequently—though in distinct ways—emphasize situational knowledge, orthopraxy and existential fluidity (e.g., Whitt et al. 2001; de Oliveira and

Nisbett 2017a, 2017b; ed. Andía 2019; Crippen 2021b, 2023a). This contrasts with dominant Western tendencies to analytically isolate static objects—propensities that are influential but not wholly universal within the intellectual history of the Global North (see de Oliveira and Nisbett 2017a, 2017b).

Global Indigenous sides of the account developed in this article will focus primarily—though not exclusively—on Asian perspectives that James may have absorbed through his Transcendentalist predecessors, as well as on Amerindian worldviews he may have encountered within the US milieu or during his Amazonian expedition. The Transcendentalists often drew on French translations of Asian texts, admiring the philosophical insights yet lacking area expertise (see Crippen 2023a). This limitation likely applied to James as well, combining to virtually guarantee a degree of idealization of non-Western outlooks. Even so, I will argue that James's thought and global Indigenous traditions illuminate one another in mutually instructive ways, and together they remain relevant—indeed, anticipating a range of more recent religious and metaphysical literature.

My basic argument is that James's philosophy of science and his general epistemology bridge Western and non-Western orientations—whether intentionally or not. Consider James's (1890a, 1890b) critique of British empiricism: he maintained that coherent perception depends on selective interests that accentuate some features while marginalizing others. This aligns with the Western focus on static objects, yet James rooted these interests in broader, dynamic human networks, fitting a myriad of Global Indigenous outlooks. By the end of his career, James (1904a, 1904b, 1907, 1911) was emphasizing that knowledge is context-bound, rejecting the subject–object divide and disputing the notion of consciousness as an inner kernel and bearer of experience—outlooks that resonate with many non-Western perspectives. James (1902, 1907, 1909) also appeared to embrace both monism and pluralism, additionally arguing that reality overflows language and logic (James 1909, p. 94), echoing ancient Chinese texts (e.g., trans. Lau 1972, Chs. 1, 42; trans. Cleary 1993, Bks. 10, 14, 21). His ideas simultaneously resonate with narratives of Amerindian animism offered by scholars such as Viveiros de Castro (2004), as well as with Latour's (2005) account of actor–network theory. A pragmatist reading of these perspectives supports an expanded version of Clark and Chalmers's (1998) extended mind thesis—one in which the world itself becomes psychically imbued. My aim in this article here is to explore these connections and to consider the possibility that James was directly or indirectly influenced by non-Western sources.

2. James's Life and Epistemic Anxiety

A thinker's biography invariably shapes their intellectual contributions, and William James is no exception. This section explores three aspects of his life that profoundly influenced his pragmatism and scientific philosophy: his chronic indecisiveness, his early psychological inertia and his lifelong attempt to reconcile spiritualism with science. I also touch on resonances between James's thought and global Indigenous traditions, specifically those from Asia.

William, the eldest of five, was born in New York City to Mary and Henry James Sr. in 1842. His shrewd and practical but not especially intellectual mother contrasted his father, who wrote on theology, philosophy and literature, often self-publishing with the help of an inherited family fortune (Allen 1967, Chs. 1–2). Henry Sr. associated with the Transcendentalists, and when Emerson visited, his son joined their conversations (Allen 1967, p. 24). He also read Emerson's essays aloud to William, who would return to the great sage's corpus in the 1870s and again at the century's end (Riepe 1968; Bush 2017). Given that Emerson's work—like that of many American intellectuals before him—bears

the imprint of Asian philosophies (e.g., Versluis 1993; Foust 2017; Wang 2021; Crippen 2023a), it is reasonable to assume William absorbed some of these influences.

Biographers (Allen 1967, Chs. 1–2; Bjork 1988, Ch. 2; Menand 2001, Chs. 4–6; Richardson 2006, pt. 1) note Henry Sr.'s deep influence on his children's intellectual development, which contributed to both William's future fame and that of his novelist brother, Henry James Jr. The children had private tutors, attended elite schools and visited museums and art exhibitions across Europe and the US. These privileges, however, came at the cost of stability. Suspicious of institutions, Henry Sr. frequently moved his children between schools, and by 1855, William and Henry Jr. had attended ten. He also moved his family between places in the US and Europe, spending seven years without a permanent home. Still, William gained an exceptionally cosmopolitan and multilingual upbringing.

In 1858, the family relocated to Newport, Rhode Island, where William began studying with the artist William Morris Hunt (see Perry 1935a, p. 191). The arrangement was short-lived, as the family soon returned to Europe. His mother probably wanted him to choose a more practical path than art. His father, on the other hand, hoped to raise William with both artistic and spiritual values, but still wanted him to study science (Richards 1987, Ch. 9; Taylor 1990, 1996; Richardson 2006, pt. 1). A follower of Emanuel Swedenborg—philosopher, inventor, scientist and Christian mystic—Henry Sr. was swayed by Swedenborg's aim of linking the physical and divine realms (Ibid.). Though William would later reject key aspects of his father's thought, he continued the project of reconciling science and spiritualism, as will soon be shown.

William returned to his artistic training with Hunt after the European sojourn but abandoned the pursuit to study chemistry at Harvard in 1861. He struggled and found his interests lay more in biology. Soon he shifted focus to anatomy and physiology, later to medicine, entering Harvard Medical School in 1864. On occasion, James drifted from academia, taking leave in 1863 due to poor health, and again in 1865 to join Louis Agassiz's expedition in Brazil. He left once more in 1867, this time for a year-and-a-half stay in Europe where he convalesced in health spas, read philosophy, pondered art and briefly studied physiology and psychology at the University of Berlin (see Richards 1987, Ch. 9; Menand 2001, Chs. 4–6; Richardson 2006, pt. 1). He graduated from Harvard with an MD in 1869, his first and only degree, and a soft one at that—in his day, a two- or three-year program with no required undergraduate study.

James's repeated leaves of absence and shifting academic focus suggest a conflicted young man, pulled in different directions and never fully satisfied. Entering medical school was itself an attempt to reconcile competing inclinations. "On one side," as a note from 1863 reads, "is [intellectual life]; upon the other is business." The former "leads to mental dignity and independence; combined, however, with physical penury." The latter leads "to material comfort, but . . . [with] a kind of selling of one's soul" (in Perry 1935a, pp. 215–16). James longed for an intellectual life but felt compelled to manage practical affairs, and a medical career seemed to offer both. His view soon changed. Early in training, he found his teachers uninspiring and the profession humbug laden. There was, he felt, too much business, and too much practice. Lacking skill as a practitioner and disliking hands-on work, he grew disillusioned. While he felt an abstract duty to be practical—a notion he would later formalize into pragmatism—"the practice of medicine did not attract him" (Perry 1935a, p. 216; also see Richardson 2006, pp. 60–61). His feelings toward sorting samples in the Amazon and running a psychology lab later in his career were similarly detached (Crippen and Schulkin 2020, Ch. 1).

Though written nearly half a century later, James's *Pragmatism* (1907) reflects these tensions. There, he distinguished between "tender-minded" and "tough-minded" philosophical temperaments. The former are "Rationalistic," "Intellectualistic," "Idealistic,"

"Optimistic," "Religious," "Free-Willist" and "Dogmatical"; the latter "Empiricistic," "Sensationalistic," "Materialistic," "Pessimistic," "Irreligious," "Fatalistic" and "Sceptical" (p. 13). The first are like "tender-foot Bostonians," the second akin to "Rocky Mountain roughs" (p. 14). As a member of Boston's elite who cherished his rustic Adirondack retreat, James literally lived on both sides of this divide. He experienced it figuratively as well, drawn to art and philosophy and to defending the rationality of spiritual belief and the occult, yet committed to a practical, empirically grounded intellectual stance.

There is an additional resonance in James's mountain metaphor and his affection for the Adirondacks. In a speech honoring Emerson, James (1903) observed that one might seek understanding not only from the sky and forest, but also from the crow, weed, snowflake or a farmer working his field. This view—rooted in Emerson and seemingly absorbed by James—echoes themes found in several Chinese traditions. Confucian texts—which Emerson read and Thoreau translated from French editions (Crippen 2023a)—portray nature as cultivated and morally instructive, reflecting the region's long-standing agricultural legacy (Li and Wei 2023). This means nature is not separate but partly made by humans—an idea echoed by Emerson (1836, p. 92) and throughout James's philosophy. Daoism, while less focused on social and agricultural concerns, is even more insistent on harmonizing with the natural world. Although there is no direct evidence that the Transcendentalists read texts like the *Daodejing*, scholars speculate that Thoreau may have encountered French translations (Ch'en 1972; Crippen 2023a). These Asian traditions—along with Buddhism, which the Transcendentalists clearly engaged, even publishing portions of the *Lotus Sutra* in *The Dial*—emphasize contextual, embodied experience, which would become central to James's mature philosophy. His pragmatism's emphasis on habit mirrors Confucian attention to ritual and Daoist appreciation of practical knowledge over abstract theory. In *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), James briefly addressed non-Western traditions such as Buddhism, Sufism and Vedism. While the extent of their influence on his thought is difficult to determine, the affinities are undeniable.

Another aspect of James's pragmatic philosophy is that it was developed largely as a calculus for making decisions that cannot be settled by evidence alone—a theme reflected both in his biography and in several illustrative episodes discussed by Menand (2001, Ch. 4). One such episode involved a months-long internal debate over whether to resign from a position, which he only resolved two years later. In another case, James became convinced his son Francis disliked his name, so he began calling him John and ultimately rechristened him Alexander at age seven. James remained unemployed into his thirties, and Evans (1990, pp. 13–14) describes him as experiencing a kind of extended adolescence, marked by "avoidance or forestalling of commitments, as well as avoiding firm definitions."

One of James's core concerns mirrored his father's: reconciling spiritualism with materialism, which he took to be deterministic at that point in his life. Notebooks and letters from the late 1860s and early 1870s reveal a melancholic James brooding over existential questions. He wrote of being "swamped in an empirical philosophy," worrying "that we are Nature through and through" and "that not a wiggle of our will happens save as the result of physical laws" (in Perry 1935a, p. 153). During this time, he struggled to choose a path or maintain direction. Romantic inhibitions and health issues—both psychological and physical—left him feeling at the mercy of forces beyond his control (Richards 1987), intensifying his anxiety over the apparent impotence of will.

In the spring of 1870, James encountered the work of the French neo-Kantian philosopher Charles Renouvier—a turning point in his life. Reflecting on it, he wrote, "I think that yesterday was a crisis in my life. I finished the first part of Renouvier's second *Essais* and see no reason why his definition of free will—'the sustaining of a thought because *I choose to* when I might have other thoughts'—need be the definition of illusion." He added, "At

any rate, I will assume for the present—until next year—that it is no illusion. My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will" (in Perry 1935a, p. 323).

Although it may be doubted whether this moment alone cured James's psychological maladies, it remains significant for several reasons. It shows how deeply he felt threatened by deterministic versions of materialism—so much so that he treated belief in free will as a remedy for his existential crisis. Renouvier's formulation also laid the groundwork for James's view of consciousness as "a fighter for ends." This would be central to his anti-materialist argument for the causal efficacy of consciousness (e.g., James 1879a) and to his later pragmatic philosophy. It would also provide foundations for his defense of spiritualism (e.g., James 1878a; also see Crippen 2010, 2011). He later reinforced this view with Darwinian principles, developing an epistemology that justified decision-making amid insufficient evidence—a condition he saw as universal. This same model would eventually support his defense of belief-based actions, including those grounded in spiritual commitments.

3. The Sacred and the Scientific

James's dilemma was characteristic of the 19th century. Divided between materialistic and romantic worldviews, he wanted, in his own words, "to unite empiricism with spiritualism" (in Perry 1935b, p. 443). He wanted "scientific loyalty to facts . . . but also the old confidence in human values . . . of the religious or romantic type" (James 1907, p. 17). This section and the next show how he reconciled empirical commitments with spiritual perspectives, offering a rebuttal to certain 21st-century critiques of religion before they were formulated. While focusing on Abrahamic traditions that emphasize belief in the unseen, I also briefly touch on non-Western views, which are explored more fully later.

Critics of theism frequently contend that spiritual claims are deliberately insulated from empirical scrutiny, often invoking unobservable or untestable realities. James's antagonist Clifford (1877) raised this concern. More recently, Sagan (1995, p. 160) has done the same. He presents a scenario in which a dragon is said to inhabit someone's garage. Yet the dragon is invisible, floats without leaving physical traces, breathes fire without emitting heat and evades detection by spray paint, which does not cling to its insubstantial skin. In short, no conceivable test could confirm or refute the dragon's existence. Sagan's analogy underscores a broader critique of theological assertions: that they evade falsifiability (Dawkins 2006, Ch. 2; Russell [1952] 1997, pp. 543–48).

Although religious skeptics often focus on Abrahamic faiths, many non-Western traditions similarly suggest that reality is not confined to what can be materially demonstrated. The *Daodejing* (trans. Lau 1972, Ch. 1) portrays the *Dao* as an obscure and ineffable source of existence. In Indigenous American Lakota cosmologies, *Wakan Tanka* (the Great Mystery) signifies an animating sacred force permeating all things that resist conceptual representation (Deloria 2003; Powers 1987). Likewise, in some African religions, divinity often resides in hidden aspects of nature, ancestral spirits or the breath of life—realities accessed through ritual, vision and transformative practices rather than straightforward empirical observations (Mbiti 1990; Gyekye 1995; Hallen 2006).

Such traditions frame the unseen as preconditions for understanding—an idea James would take up, as will be increasingly shown. Still, while he defended belief in the unseen under certain circumstances, Sagan's (1995) invisible dragon illustrates what James (1897) called halfway empiricism: a dubious anti-pluralistic stance that disallows inconvenient evidence ahead of time (pp. vi–viii). Halfway empiricism, however, persists in science as well as religion. James cited the presumption that reality is wholly mechanical, arguing that proponents are wont to reject anomalous evidence as flawed (pp. 323–24). If so, they hold their views not because of evidence, but regardless of it. Additionally, scientists use experi-

mental and mathematical methods to bring into appearance particular world grammars, that is, ways of seeing and putting things together (James 1879b, 1890b, Ch. 22). A case of this is psychologists funneling behavior into discrete categories to make it statistically expressible (Crippen 2010).

Another example that James (1890b, Ch. 28) elaborates on is the principle of uniformity—the belief that nature operates through consistent, lawlike and hence mathematizable regularities, whether deterministically or probabilistically. This metaphysical stance tends to sideline anomalous results, which are rarely published, potentially inflating the sense that unseen orderliness underlies even apparently haphazard phenomena. While such parallels between scientific belief and religious faith do not make them equivalent, critics of religion often overlook their shared epistemic features.

In denouncing faith, Harris (2004)—a leading New Atheist, along with Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett and Christopher Hitchens—cites Hebrews 11:1. This New Testament (trans. ESV 1972) passage defines faith as "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." The Quran (trans. Haleem 2008, 2:3) echoes the sentiment, as do various Jewish scriptures, including the stories of Job and of Abraham and Isaac. Harris argues that such faith is "entirely self-justifying," claiming that belief without evidence is treated as evidence of truth (p. 64). However, his critique misses the fact that in Abrahamic narratives, faith often leads to actions, which generate outcomes that empirically align with the initial conviction. Additionally, the scientific worldviews Harris favors also rest on foundational assumptions that are not—and often cannot be—empirically demonstrated. Compared to the sciences, however, religious traditions more often acknowledge their dogmatic elements. Catholic seminaries, for instance, include formal courses in dogmatics. Similarly, while some Buddhist epistemologies list *pratyakṣa* (direct perception) and *anumāna* (inference) as knowledge sources, *śabda* (scriptural testimony) remains authoritative under appropriate conditions (Dreyfus 1997; Matilal 1986).

Here, James (1890b) would reiterate that scientific tenets—such as the principle of uniformity—resemble "a religious faith more than assent to a demonstration" (p. 637). Scientists have also extrapolated from idealized, non-existent and hence unseen constructs, such as dimensionless point-mass interactions or marbles rolling on frictionless planes, deriving laws "under . . . the most rebellious appearances" (p. 636). Similarly, scientists observe sequences, and not linking causes, only inferring the latter (Hume [1740] 2000, Bk. 1, Pt. 3, §II). Still, as James (1890b, p. 671) wrote, the word "cause" is a "demand for some deeper sort of inward connection between phenomena than their merely habitual time-sequence." Parodying Acts 17:23, he added that the very concept of cause is "an altar to an unknown god; an empty pedestal marking the place of a hoped-for statue." For James, both science and religion rely on faith in the unseen, which can be pragmatically justified and not devolve into halfway empiricism if acknowledged for its temporary utility. A researcher's conviction, for example, that all diseases have causes—even if unidentified—may help her persist in the face of failures to yield tangible results.

A takeaway for James is that belief in the unseen has meaning if it produces sensible outcomes. To adapt James's (1882) illustration, imagine a trapped mountaineer whose only escape is a highly uncertain leap across a chasm. Waiting risks growing too weak to jump, while leaping with confidence increases the chance of success, thus turning initial faith into evidence. James (1911, pp. 1099–100) argued that full evidential certainty is always lacking before the fact, so that the real choice is between trusting and distrusting forms of faith. If there is not good reason to doubt, James (1897, p. 11) urged that having trusting faith in what one desires can be rational because it helps ensure the wanted outcome. He added that refusing to decide is itself a "passional decision." His position challenges Clifford and the New Atheists, who typically dismiss emotion-driven belief (Dennett is

somewhat an exception). This is despite ample evidence showing that intelligibility erodes without emotion and that calculating logic alone leads to irrational choices (for review, see Crippen and Schulkin 2020; Crippen 2021a, 2022, 2025a). Emotion, of course, does not guarantee rationality. A case in point is hate-driven, arbitrary racism. Ironically, Dawkins provides another in his own preposterous emotional appeal, which casts 21st-century Western atheists as heroic nonconformists persecuted as much as homosexuals in the 1950s (p. 4), further equating religious upbringing with sexual abuse (pp. 317–18).

As stated, however, James would acknowledge that there can be legitimate reasons not to trust. In line with Sagan and the New Atheists, he would reject the kind of blind faith that leads fundamentalists to embrace young Earth creationism or flat Earth theory in the face of overwhelming contradictory evidence and the lack of practical viability. Still, to portray such beliefs as central to major world religions is to perpetuate a caricature—something the New Atheists frequently do. For example, Dawkins (2006, Ch. 7) suggests that slavery is a logical consequence of Christianity, while Hitchens (2007, p. 181) falsely claims that John Adams owned slaves in this context. Although certain Old Testament passages do prescribe rules for slavery, the New Atheists critique overlooks the fact that majority-Christian nations ultimately abolished the institution, aided by Christian abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass and the Quakers, whom Hitchens disparages for their pacifism (Hitchens et al. 2019, pp. 125–26). Also ignored is the fact that philosophy and science have likewise been used to justify slavery and racism, yet both have evolved—just as Christian thought has.

If halfway empiricism entails ignoring inconvenient facts, then the New Atheists often exemplify the tendency. Dennett (2006, p. 210) mocks the biblical observation that Adam was formed from dirt. But humans are in fact made from cosmic dust. And in any case, ancient Hebrews likely did not take the narrative literally, since two different creation stories abut one another, one of them not asserting that humans were molded out of mud (cf. Gen. 1:26–27; 2:7–23). Dawkins (2006, Ch. 3) ridicules Christians as too stupid to see problems in Anselm's and Aquinas's ontological arguments for God's existence. Yet his critique merely echoes that of Gaunilo, another medieval monk. Harris (2004, pp. 94–95) highlights the Septuagint's mistranslation of "young woman" as "virgin," leading to New Testament claims about Mary. He seems unaware that theologians have long acknowledged this. Harris also defends US foreign policy while spotlighting Islamic violence, mostly ignoring terrorism's sociopolitical roots in colonialism and neo-colonialism (e.g., Ch. 4). He cites violent Quranic verses (p. 32), not noting that prescriptions to kill unbelievers and drive out invaders (2:191) are immediately followed by advocations for peace once aggression stops (2:193–194). Such verses, when linguistically and historically situated, amount to wartime self-defense orders, and such contextual patterns repeat elsewhere in the Quran (Crippen 2023b, pp. 281–82). Hitchens (2007, p. 46), meanwhile, mocks temporary marriage in Shia Islam—not noting its kinship to short-term liaisons in the West, albeit with obligations to any resulting children.

New Atheists can also engage in definitional circumscription that borders on equating religiosity with delinquency, atheism with the reverse. Once more, this approaches halfway empiricism insofar as the move delimits what counts as rational or moral in advance, curtailing open-ended inquiry. New Atheists, for example, repeatedly claim Hitler was a closet Christian (Harris 2004, p. 106; Dawkins 2006, p. 310; Hitchens 2007, pp. 236–43), as if immoral degeneracy implies religiosity. Dawkins (2006) frequently notes that historical figures he favors were deists or pantheists but then equates these positions with intelligent agnosticism or atheism, irrespective of what his intellectual heroes professed. He claims that most Nobel laureates are atheists (pp. 97–103). This overlooks the longstanding complementarity between science and religion (Brooke 1991; McGrath 2010; Harrison 2015);

or that giants like Newton, Kepler, Wallace and Lemaître were religious; or that the Nobel laureate Schrödinger (1967) linked Vedic thought to science; or that fairly recent surveys show about half of scientists are religious and many more are spiritually inclined, with only around 10% hostile to religion (Ecklund 2010).

Admittedly, the account so far omits some complexities, such as Lakatos's (1978) contention that tenets accepted by fiat are scientifically progressive only if they highlight empirical anomalies, leading to novel predictions and confirmations—exemplified by the proposal and discovery of a new planet to preserve Newtonian mechanics. But the fact remains that scientific critiques of religion cannot rest solely on the latter's reliance on the unseen—not without calling science's own epistemic foundations into question. A more substantive objection would be that religious faith, unlike scientific belief, fails to generate knowledge or improve lives. Yet Schrödinger seems to provide a counterexample of the former, and there is no shortage of people claiming religious conviction yields tangible benefits in their personal lives. If this is so, then perhaps spiritual devotees across the globe—from the Daoist sage to the Lakota holy woman to the Yoruba diviner—have long been onto something: that unseen forces may structure what we can see, and that belief, when pragmatically oriented, can be as much a path to wisdom as to wonder.

4. Generative Faiths

This section elaborates on some consequences of James's (1882, 1897) contention that "the test of belief is willingness to act" (p. 70) and that "there is some believing tendency wherever there is willingness to act at all" (p. 3). Three points follow: that actions measure the strength of one's convictions; that belief enables behavior; and that the viability of a belief is judged by the outcomes—affirming or refuting—that result from acting on it. A key caveat is that the world does not let us do anything whatsoever, so that most struggle to believe they can fly by flapping their arms.

Extending this interplay between belief and action, James (1907, p. 201) proposed that truth "is not a stagnant property" but rather "a process of valid-*ation*" or "veri-*fication*." The italicized suffixes—from Latin for "action" and "making"—indicate that truth is enacted, developed and built up over time. From this perspective, a hammer can swing true, and a car may be faithful, just as a subway map is trustworthy if—like the tools—it *constructively* facilitates tasks at hand. Importantly, a subway map's effectiveness does not hinge on exact representational accuracy, but on its capacity to scaffold wayfinding and advance navigation (Crippen 2017, 2025a; also see Solymosi and Shook 2013).

As presented here, James's position also parallels the phenomenological notion of truth as an unveiling that occurs through practical engagement with the world (see Heidegger [1960] 1971, pp. 17–86; Crippen 2007). This view is exemplified by the carpenter who comes to understand the properties of softwoods and hardwoods through hands-on interaction—literally constructing embodied, non-nominal and functional classifications in the process of building (Crippen 2017). Revelation occurs as well when poets twist language to illuminate latent meaning (Dewey 1925, p. 360) or when scientists disturb systems to expose hidden phenomena. Take atomic theory: belief in unseen particles motivated experimental efforts that eventually rendered the model empirically compelling. The theory persisted not because it was proven once and for all, but because it remained actionable. For James (1902)—and this is a central point in this section—the same pragmatic standard applies to religious faith: its value lies in its ability to meaningfully orient human behavior, animating the world by introducing changes to it.

These views resonate not only with phenomenological thought but also with various non-Western traditions. Classical Chinese Daoism, for instance, holds that insight into nature arises not through rigid conceptualization but through spontaneous attunement to

the "Way" (*Dao*)—a kind of lived responsiveness (trans. Watson 1968, Ch. 2). Likewise, in Buddhism, the principle of right action on the Eightfold Path asserts that ethical behavior is inseparable from correct belief (Rahula 1974, Ch. 5). The *Analects* similarly emphasize that inner sincerity must be expressed through right action to cultivate personal and social harmony (trans. Slingerland 2003, Ch. 2). These Chinese and Buddhist perspectives find echoes in the orthopraxy of many Indigenous American philosophies, which add that fundamental realities are revealed through communion with the land (Whitt et al. 2001; ed. Waters 2004). In the Bhagavad Gita, orthopraxy also links to fulfilling one's dharma (duty) and achieving liberation (moksha) through action, not just renunciation (trans. Miller 1986). As in James's pragmatism, these traditions reject any sharp divide between inner conviction and outward practice: beliefs become truth through their literal embodiment.

If belief and action are accordingly entwined, can we "will" beliefs into being by acting as if they were true? For James (1890b), we can—provided that acting on such beliefs generates validating effects, though disconfirming outcomes may be realized, too (p. 321). For instance, a woman who wills herself to believe she is not as sick as she feels and gets out of bed for rugby practice overcomes a key symptom—her inability to rise—thereby creating an empirical basis for her belief. By contrast, it is hardly actionable to believe one can walk on water like Jesus or travel from Busan to Seoul by heading north. And acting on the notion that cardiovascular exercise can be replaced by smoking simply because both elevate heart rate is likely to invite social friction and adverse health consequences. The history of science offers parallel examples. Ether theory ceased to be actionable, on the one hand. On the other, the Large Hadron Collider has generated Higgs boson and fermion particles, confirming predictions that were initially unverified. James (1882) defines faith in precisely these terms: as "the readiness to act in a cause the prosperous issue of which is not certified in advance" (p. 70). Faith is "synonymous with working hypothesis" (p. 73)—"working" in the dual senses of being provisional and a means of acting in the world (see Crippen 2010).

We have seen that nature reveals her secrets to scientists who faithfully act on unprovable metaphysical assumptions—where "metaphysics" refers to foundational claims about what can be said to have reality at all, such as the belief that the cosmos is entirely physical or that all events are causally determined. Analogously, the divine may remain hidden from those unwilling to move beyond skepticism. James (1895a) notes that scientific progress is propelled by an "imperious inner demand" for order—a drive to uncover the mathematical harmonies "hidden between the chinks and interstices of the crude natural world" (pp. 18–19). Rarely, he observes, is a law discovered or a fact verified that was not first sought—often through strenuous effort—in response to this internal need. James extends this reasoning to religious longing: the impulse to view nature as "a sign of something more spiritual and eternal" carries as much justificatory weight for the believer as the scientist's faith in causal uniformity (p. 19).

For James, then, faith is about more than perseverance; it is a framework for meaning. It acts as a "world-grammar," organizing fragmentary experiences into coherent narratives while guiding behavior that, in turn, produces observable effects. As James (1902) insists in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, "I find it hard to believe that principles"—even those pertaining to the invisible— "can exist which make no difference in facts" (pp. 521–22). He adds that belief in "the unseen region . . . produces effects in this world" and "consequences in the way of conduct." Yet "that which produces effects . . . must be termed a reality itself, so I feel as if we had no philosophic excuse for calling the unseen or mystical world unreal" (p. 516).

If the pragmatic criterion—Does it produce effects?—serves as a litmus test for reality, then Harris's (2004, p. 64) earlier mentioned mockery of Hebrews 11:1 inadvertently offers an example that, with slight revision, supports the very notion he aims to reject. Harris asks

us to imagine a peculiar and exhilarating conviction that Nicole Kidman is in love with him. Although they have never met, he sarcastically suggests he will treat this subjective feeling as evidence of her affection. The scenario unfolds as follows: his emotions imply that he and Kidman must share a unique—perhaps even metaphysical—bond. If that is the case, why not stake out her residence in hopes of initiating a meeting? The conclusion he wants us to reach, of course, is that faith is a dubious enterprise.

Harris's example is an obvious straw man, so let us reframe it more charitably. Imagine Noor has developed feelings for Ari. If Noor receives clear evidence that Ari dislikes her, then it is reasonable for her to withdraw. But if the evidence is ambiguous, the more rational course may be to act as if what she hopes were true actually is. Crucially, this entails testing the belief and accepting the risk of disappointment. For example, Noor might invite Ari to discuss a work project over coffee. If he declines bluntly, she gains evidence of disinterest. He might accept yet only seek friendship. Over time, however, he could develop romantic feelings—or not. Perhaps Noor even learns that he already reciprocates her affection. The key insight is that without a modest leap of faith, no progress happens. By taking that leap, Noor may help bring about the reality she envisions—as in the case where Ari initially sees her platonically but later grows to love her.

Broadly speaking, science parallels the Noor and Ari case in that beliefs shape actions which in turn produce empirical outcomes. The obvious upshot is that scientific facts emerge from human agency—for instance, when experimenters reveal light as either a wave or a particle depending on whether their methods presuppose one or the other. As physicist Finkelstein (2003b, p. 182) provocatively remarks, we seem to have entered an era of "non-objective physics." Werner Heisenberg developed quantum theory in the same city and decade as Kandinsky introduced the term *"non-objective art,"* prompting speculation that Heisenberg may have drawn inspiration from Kandinsky when labeling quantum theory non-objective physics. Unlike classical physics, *which* "represses the observer and the act of observation, naively describing 'things as they are,'" quantum theory's central premise is to "talk about what you do, not about 'things as they are'."

Finkelstein (2003a) has linked his pragmatic views to Buddhist epistemologies, which emphasize that subject and object co-arise and that knowing is inseparable from doing. This idea also lies at the heart of pragmatism, which might, for instance, treat the slushy or icy qualities of snow as emerging from how it impedes, facilitates or complicates a skier's movement (Crippen 2025c). Within this pragmatic framework, James's view holds that observable effects are generated by acting on belief—a pattern evident in everyday, scientific and religious life where leaps of faith often produce outcomes that would otherwise remain unrealized. The New Testament repeatedly asserts that faith can "move mountains" (Mark 11:23; Matthew 17:20; Matthew 21:21; 1 Corinthians 13:2), a theme echoed by spiritual leaders such as Gandhi (1925, p. 331). A similar lesson appears in a Daoist parable: when an elderly man vows to level mountains blocking his path and is mocked for his ambition, he replies, "My descendants will endure forever, but these mountains will not grow. What difficulty is there in flattening them?" (trans. Graham 1960, p. 100). The pragmatic insight is clear: with sustained belief and effort, monumental feats become possible—whether ending global poverty, toppling empires (as India did through nonviolent resistance) or landing humans on the Moon.

On a personal scale, faith operates similarly. You might pray for relief for the poor, only to feel an inward prompting: "You can help make this happen." Acting on that impulse, you become the answer to your own prayer, fulfilling its hope through your deeds. Thus, faith proves indispensable—not only in religion, but in science and daily life. Its necessity lies in its role as a precondition for actualizing what was initially merely believed. By motivating action, faith helps transform belief into reality, thereby rendering it true.

5. Global Threads in James's Religious and Scientific Epistemology

Though non-Western threads have been touched upon, they remain underexplored. This section examines how the epistemology James employed in his discussions of religion and science bridges Western and non-Western perspectives. The focus is primarily on Asian traditions—some of which James may have encountered indirectly through the writings of the Transcendentalists—as well as on Indigenous American influences that scholars suggest shaped intellectual currents in the US (Wilshire 2000; Pratt 2002; Mann 2005). That said, in the absence of clear textual evidence for deliberate assimilation, I remain agnostic on the question of intentional adoption.

As noted at the outset, some of James's views are distinctly Western yet resonate with global traditions. A case in point is his concept of selective interests, rooted in Darwinism (Crippen 2010, 2011, 2018) and developed in his early and middle writings (James 1865a, 1865b, 1878a, 1878b, 1879a, 1880, 1890a, 1890b). There, he challenged the notion—especially prominent in Spencer's Lamarckian empiricism—that the environment directly molds the mind. Drawing instead on Darwin, James (1880, p. 622) praised the conjecture that variations arise independently of selective pressures. Extending this to ontogeny, he added that minds adapt to their environments without being directly shaped by them.

James (1880, p. 456) proposed one mechanism by which novel ideas emerge: "accidental out-births of spontaneous variation in . . . the excessively unstable human brain." James (1890b, p. 636) later observed that most of these ideational out-births "perish through their worthlessness." Still, some form meaningful connections and are reinforced. In such cases, the environment "is the cause of their preservation, not that of their production." A second mechanism involves sensory input: while the environment offers abundant content, only a fraction is absorbed through selective attention. As James (1890a) wrote, people "select, out of the same mass of presented objects, those which suited [their] private interest" and "*rationally* . . . connect them" in different ways (p. 287). In this way, selective attention carves and refines experience "much as a sculptor works on ... stone" (p. 288) and ultimately "makes experience" (p. 403). On such bases, James (1879b) asserted that a carpenter sees oil as a wood darkener, a mechanic as a lubricant—depending on how their interests relate them to the world.

James's thinking here aligns with a common Western tendency to analytically isolate and prioritize foreground objects (de Oliveira and Nisbett 2017b). Yet this cognitive style is not unexceptionally deployed in the West. Often, for instance, Darwin (1859, p. 73) avoided reducing the world to its constituent components, instead viewing affairs ecologically in "ever-increasing circles of complexity." Although Transcendentalism was largely a pre-Darwinian movement, it shared a similar emphasis on interconnectedness. The movement also bears the imprint of Asian thought (e.g., Versluis 1993; Foust 2017; Crippen 2023a), a connection that may help illuminate James's partly Darwinian-inspired account of values.

Thoreau (1842, p. 40), for example, warned not to "underrate the value of a fact"—a stance resonating with the frequently cited (if overgeneralized) view that early Chinese philosophy did not rigidly separate facts from values or reality from appearance (e.g., Geaney 2000; Willman 2016). This suggests that fact and value can merge, exemplified by a community accurately deeming a rabid dog to factually be a genuine threat. Tiantai Buddhism—a tradition the Transcendentalists encountered when they published excerpts of the *Lotus Sutra* in *The Dial*—asserts that the world of appearances ultimately equates to reality (trans. Watson 1993). Parallel ideas appear in Huayan Buddhism, where certain interpretations posit that enlightenment dissolves any absolute distinction between reality and appearance (Van Norden and Jones 2019).

In this vein, James viewed values in a non-skeptical way: oil really *is* (valuable as) a wood darkener or a lubricant when used by carpenters or mechanics, and it accordingly

takes on these appearances in those contexts. Yet certain Buddhist strands, with their doctrine of dependent co-origination, have a more skeptical tone. The Korean monk Wonhyo illustrates this in a tale where, thirsty in a dark cave, he drank what he thought was pure water from a gourd—only to find in daylight that it was filthy water from a skull in a tomb (trans. Muller et al. 2012, pp. 304–5). While one might argue that even filthy water has real value to the dying, the episode suggests that desires—or what James calls interests—can distort perception. This aligns with the *Daodejing*'s (trans. Lau 1972) advice to look with the purity of a baby (Ch. 10) or to "rid yourself of desires in order to observe [nature's] secrets" (Ch. 1), immediately followed, however, by the qualification: "always allow yourself to have desires in order to observe its manifestations" (Ch. 1). James (1878b, p. 256) likewise argued that without the narrowing force of interest, the experiential world becomes undifferentiated. While less committed to the idea that affective or emotional dispositions distort perception by prompting agents to tease the phenomenal field into separate entities, James (1890a, p. 488) similarly describes a baby's surroundings as conceptually indistinct—"one great blooming, buzzing confusion."

Along with James, the just cited Buddhist and Daoist ideas suggest that, to varying extents, humans construct their own experiential worlds. Confucianism offers a more literal reiteration of this view in its understanding of nature as something akin to a human-cultivated garden (Li and Wei 2023). Emerson (1836, p. 92) echoed the notion in his exhortation to "build, therefore, your own world," a sentiment mirrored by James in his discussions of sculpting and making experiences. While it is possible that James absorbed aspects of this outlook through Transcendentalists' engagements with Asian philosophies, scholars such as Wilshire (2000) and Pratt (2002) also argue that pragmatism bears the imprint of Indigenous American thought. Of course, it is not feasible to reduce the plurality of Indigenous perspectives across the Americas to a single outlook. Nonetheless, these traditions overwhelmingly regard nature as something with which humans are always entwined—not merely something encountered on occasion, such as during a hike in the mountains. This view is factually accurate, given that environments ranging from the rainforests of Brazil to the North American Great Plains were cultivated by their original human inhabitants (Mann 2005).

For Indigenous Americans, this understanding also carries a range of religious and philosophical implications. Black Elk (in DeMallie 1984), an Oglala Lakota elder, articulated the passage of time through the land's seasonal cycles, referencing phases such as the Moon of Blooming Turnip, Black Cherries, Falling Leaves, Growing Calf Hair, Popping Trees and Frost in Tipis (pp. 291–92). He frequently referenced the four directions, plus earth and sky, which form a sacred framework for land-centered spirituality, medicine and the very nature of existence. This deep ecological connection is upheld through rituals—for instance, burying the placenta and umbilical cord to signify a bond between a child and the land, or the sharing of clan names with mountains, clouds and animals (Whitt et al. 2001). In a similar spirit, members of the Haida Nation have objected to their totem poles being preserved in museums, insisting instead on allowing them to decay and return to the land (Greenwald 2025).

More broadly, Indigenous communities often express concern that if the land is radically altered—through dam construction, for instance—or if they are forcibly relocated, then medicine (knowledge) will be lost. One Indigenous woman of the Navajo (Diné) Nation speaks of the incomprehensibility of being removed from Big Mountain, Arizona, remarking that if she were relocated, the plants and animals would not know her, and she would not know them (Whitt et al. 2001).

While James (1879b) did not articulate a land-based epistemology, he expressed a resonant sentiment: "The living question always is, 'Where is it found?'" (p. 331), emphasizing

that our best hope of understanding "*what* it is" lies in registering the "embedded character" of an entity (p. 331). As James (1895b, p. 109) later elaborated, "to know an object is to lead to it through a context which the world supplies," so that a tiger is not well understood by observing it in a zoo, but rather by encountering it within its natural setting—such as the Indian subcontinent.

In some sense, this means that a thing only has a temporary essence—which, in effect, means no essence at all (see James 1890b, pp. 335–36), a view also aligning with Buddhist and Daoist strains. As James would come to see—perhaps not coincidentally shortly after he engaged to some extent with global traditions in his 1902 *Varieties of Religious Experience*—this applies not only to the world but also to human agents. In his article "Does Consciousness Exist?", James (1904a) proposed that consciousness is not a separate substrate but rather a function or mode of being immersed in the world. In other words, what we call consciousness is the ongoing stream of pure experience, including temporary relations to the events we encounter, hence not an essentially internal phenomenon. James's position once again parallels Buddhist conceptions of subjectivity as a fleeting process shaped by shifting relations in the world. It also resonates—albeit in a different register—with certain Indigenous American beliefs that psychic life extends into the land.

6. Mind, World and Indigenous Global Traditions

The vision outlined in the previous section—especially in James's "Does Consciousness Exist?"—closely parallels core insights in Buddhist thought. In particular, the Buddhist doctrine of *anattā* (non-self) denies a fixed, underlying essence to the self, stressing instead a fluid and impermanent stream of mental and physical events (Rahula 1974, Ch. 6). Likewise, the principle of *anicca*, or impermanence (Rahula 1974, Chs. 2, 4), closely parallels James's view that both things and agents lack enduring essences. What remains, according to both James and Buddhist teachings, is not a stable identity but a dynamic unfolding of experience. Buddhists typically hold that the self arises dependently and temporarily, shaped by changing conditions, and therefore lacks persistent being. James defends a similar position: consciousness is not a fixed bearer of experience but a relational process. This is an outlook that dissolves the boundary between subject and object.

The anti-dualist stance just described—which, as noted, also appears across a range of global Indigenous traditions—is central to James's radical empiricism. This is particularly evident in a second article published shortly after *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, which he prepared by revisiting Emerson's writings (Riepe 1968; Bush 2017), where he would have encountered Asian philosophical insights. In "A World of Pure Experience," James (1904b) not only rejected metaphysical bifurcations between mind and world but also affirmed that anything given in experience—no matter how fleeting, relational or marginal—counts as legitimate data. Seen in this light, both Buddhist and Indigenous American perspectives converge with James's commitment to a philosophy grounded in direct lived experience rather than abstract or essentialist formulations.

In a sense, James's claim that context grants things and events a temporary but discernible identity resonates with the causal holism present in certain Asian and Indigenous American perspectives. Yet his thinking also departs from it. The Buddhist sage Fazang exemplified causal holism by asserting that "one is all" and "all is one" (trans. Van Norden 2014, p. 88)—a view that James rejected. Still, Fazang's emphasis on the interdependence of knowledge—that we only know a thing in relation to other things—aligns with James's focus on contextual knowing. Using the analogy of constructing a dwelling, Fazang explained that "the rafter is the building" and "the building is the rafter" (trans. Elstein 2014, pp. 82–83), illustrating the premise that entities mutually constitute and define one another. Their existence therefore arises through interdependent relations.

James (1884, p. 198) argued that monism, continuity and determinism imply one another, each suggesting that events unfold in an unbroken chain linking past, present and future, forming "an absolute unity, an iron block." In contrast, pluralism, discontinuity and indeterminism permit "loose play," where one part does not necessarily dictate the others. James (1880) connected this to Darwin's view that evolution proceeds through distinct causal cycles. This allows for "some separation among things, some tremor of independence" (James 1907, p. 100), so that encountering one "bit of reality" does not mean engaging all others (James 1909, p. 285). James favored this view on pragmatic grounds, with an anachronistic testifying example being the failure to unify physics. He also considers pluralism more plausible, as it permits causal clusters without requiring universal interdependence. Interestingly, while maintaining pluralism in the sense described, James's notion of pure experience is monistic in that it dissolves the mind-world divide. In this respect, his thought aligns with certain Asian traditions, such as the *Daodejing*, which posits a singular, ineffable *Dao* that nonetheless generates the dynamic plurality of *yin* and *yang* (Shusterman 2021, p. 161).

The tension between unity and pluralism found a lived counterpart in James's own experiences. Mendes (2022) speculates that James's pluralism was nurtured during his scientific expedition to Brazil in his undergraduate years, where he encountered an extraordinary abundance and diversity of life. The South American journey, however, can also be linked to another aspect of his thought: the emerging conviction that things become what they temporarily are—and thus become knowable—only within their ecologically embedded niches, that is, their overall contexts. James's personal notes and letters from the Amazonian venture highlight a few additional points. First, although not entirely free from the prejudices of his era, he was sharply critical of expedition leader Louis Agassiz for seeking to undermine evolutionary theory, promoting scientifically racist ideas and exploiting locals. Second, James engaged directly with Indigenous South Americans (Perry 1935a, Ch. 12; Mendes 2022). While the precise influence of these encounters on his later work is difficult to gauge, some of the perspectives he may have encountered in Brazil echo themes he would go on to develop.

This biographical thread opens naturally into a broader philosophical one. Countering thinkers such as Dennett (2006), who interpret animism—common in many Indigenous perspectives—as an anthropocentric over-attribution of mind, James's situated account offers a partial defense. Both his pragmatism and his concept of pure experience reject the notion that environments are either inert or separate from mind. His younger pragmatic contemporary, Dewey (1916, p. 14), made the point especially clear, arguing that psychic life (thinking, etc.) extends into hands, tools and broader surroundings that enable specific ways of thinking and perceiving. In this sense, pragmatism anticipates Clark and Chalmers's (1998) extended mind thesis.

Viewed through certain Amazonian Indigenous philosophies, pragmatists and extended mind theorists may still stop short of the full implications. Viveiros de Castro (2004) recounts an Amerindian belief that the mere presence of persons —understood as minded beings, whether human or nonhuman—can endow seemingly inert entities with agency through their accompaniment or interaction (p. 470). From a broadened pragmatic or extended cognition perspective, this suggests that such objects are not passive backdrops but participants in an actively minded social system, capable of conferring protection or posing danger much like human or nonhuman animals. In this sense, the boundaries of mind and agency become even more porous than many pragmatists or extended mind theorists have envisioned. As Viveiros de Castro puts it, "personhood and 'perspectivity'—the capacity to occupy a point of view—is a question of degree and context rather than an absolute, diacritical property of particular species" (p. 470). He adds that "artifacts have this interestingly ambiguous ontology.

They are objects that necessarily point to a subject; as congealed actions, they are material embodiments of nonmaterial intentionality" (p. 471).

Comparable ideas appear far beyond the Amazon, as in Indigenous American Ojibwe perspectives. As Harvey (2006) explains, the Ojibwe language encodes grammatical distinctions between living and non-living entities much as many other languages mark gender (Ch. 2). The English term "animate" stems from a Latin root for life or soul, referring to entities regarded as actively alive in some respect, with the word "psychic" deriving from a Greek root meaning life, breath and soul. Ojibwe categories differentiate degrees of mindedness and activity that do not always align with biological status—rocks, for instance, may be considered animate, whereas sweetgrass is not. Such distinctions often depend on how active the entity's role is or whether its function warrants reciprocal consideration, rendering it agentive in a physical or ethical sense. Within this worldview, relationships with other beings—human or nonhuman—require careful moral negotiation, even in acts such as hunting. Drawing on Viveiros de Castro's insights, Harvey notes that this is reflected in rituals intended to depersonalize animals destined for consumption, thereby avoiding an act perceived as akin to cannibalism (Ch. 6).

These contextual and relational Amerindian ascriptions portray active places where beings co-emerge, resonating with aspects of Buddhism and Daoism and closely paralleling Latour's (2005) actor–network theory. As the name suggests, this framework conceives of the world as a web of networks in which humans and nonhumans—people, objects, technologies and even ideas—are all "actors" capable of influencing outcomes. Rather than separating the social, natural and technological into distinct domains, actor–network theory sees agency as emerging from interactions within these assemblages. On this view, multiple forms of mind can arise and dissolve in response to shifting, transitory relationships. As should be obvious at this point, the position echoes the extended-mind thesis and James's notion of pure experience, along with his claim that context renders things knowable. Read alongside the Amazonian and Ojibwe accounts, James's framework offers a philosophical vocabulary for understanding these Indigenous ontologies not as exotic or metaphorical, but as coherent accounts of a world in which agency is relational, distributed and context dependent.

Building on this relational and context-sensitive outlook, one can ask: What practical implications follow from James's overall position? The combination of his pluralism and his stress on contextual knowing undermine the generalizability of broad statements about human existence. After all, making sense of such matters often requires adopting a version of James's earlier mentioned dictum and asking: Where is the phenomenon in question found? This tends to entail pluralistic thinking about human life, which varies significantly with locale. Consider an extended example of an East Asian city—say, Busan in South Korea—that also illustrates the anti-dualist stance under discussion. In this setting, urban design may reflect the philosophical inclinations of decision-makers, but it also arises from material constraints, including mountainous topography and limited land relative to population. As a result, roads and buildings are frequently constructed at varying elevations, with structures densely clustered and oriented in non-uniform directions. This results in a visually complex environment with few distinct focal points (Crippen 2025b; Crippen et al. 2025). The overall spatial pattern in turn aligns with the less object-centric attentional styles that cultural psychologists have repeatedly observed in East Asian populations (see de Oliveira and Nisbett 2017b).

These complex spatial configurations can evoke a feeling that the city is animate and transforming around its inhabitants. The sensation is intensified by meandering street patterns reminiscent of natural footpaths and by the mist that frequently flows down the mountains that hug Korean urban areas. Such perceptually dynamic qualities parallel

findings in cultural psychology. Among these are that East Asians tend to be highly sensitive to change and to expect sudden situational reversals, while also perceiving objects as more agentically endowed than Westerners typically do (Ji et al. 2001; Nisbett 2003; Spencer-Rodgers et al. 2009). They also often perceive the self as malleable and defined through relational contexts, for example, fitting Buddhist outlooks and contrasting the more bounded self-construals common in Western populations (e.g., Kitayama et al. 2009). Historical geography further illustrates these relational dynamics: in Korean many cities, distances that are now easily and rapidly traversed by cars once posed formidable barriers before the construction of tunnels in the late twentieth century. These spatial constraints contributed to dialect variations and interprovincial biases even between geographically proximate regions (Crippen 2025b; Crippen et al. 2025). In James's terms, to know these cities and their inhabitants is not merely to catalog physical features or demographic facts, but to grasp where both are found and how their character is shaped by embedded spatial, historical and cultural relations.

A second, related point ties back to James's defense of the viability of religious belief: It can be difficult to understand—let alone legitimately condemn—a perspective that is foreign to us. This speaks directly to James's pluralism, which holds that reality is not a single, fixed order but a mosaic of partially overlapping worlds shaped by different ways of experiencing and engaging. For most scientists, the principle of uniformity is so deeply ingrained in their worldview that they almost instinctively perceive it as a self-evident reality permeating nearly all phenomena. Similarly, for many religious believers, the divine functions as an equally fundamental structuring force in their lived experiences. Its presence may be felt in flowers and trees, in life and existence itself—sensed with a vividness akin to the way one registers the roughness of wood or the blueness of the sky. James's pluralism grants legitimacy to both science and religion. Rather than subordinating one perspective to the metaphysical standards of the other, the outlook encourages recognition that different modes of knowing disclose variegated aspects of what James (1902) seems to have thought of as "the more".

7. Conclusions

James's philosophy of science outlines a pragmatic epistemology that avoids rigid distinctions between science and spiritualism. Instead of treating the two as incompatible, he showed how both rely on unprovable but actionable assumptions that guide inquiry and behavior, which in turn generate observable outcomes in the world. For James, then, truth is not a static correspondence with reality; it grows through the accumulation of practical effects. This idea—developed through his accounts of selective attention, value and habit—enabled him to treat belief as a process: one that shapes how we perceive, navigate and intervene in the world.

James's discussion of faith has an Abrahamic flavor, as he defined it as a kind of steadfast conviction in the face of uncertainty. However, he departs from conventional Sunday school framings by specifically holding that faith engages with the unknown by putting beliefs to the test—even risking their failure—through action. What is more, much of his orientation ends up aligning with a range of non-Abrahamic global traditions—including Buddhist, Daoist, Confucian and Indigenous American thought—which often emphasize contextual understanding and the inseparability of experience and action. In these traditions, knowledge is not abstract or detached but grounded in lived relationships—for example, between people and the land. Although there is little unequivocal textual evidence that non-Western traditions directly shaped James's thinking, he was likely exposed to them through multiple channels. At a minimum, this includes his encounters with Indigenous peoples of the Amazon and his engagement with Transcendentalism, which

itself bears the imprint of Asian philosophies. Notably, it was shortly after engaging with Emerson's work in preparation for *The Varieties of Religious Experience*—where James explored several global Indigenous traditions—that some of his most characteristically non-Western declarations appeared.

Important in James's considerations is his pluralism, which offers a defense of diverse ways of experiencing, giving rise to different kinds of truths, each tied to distinct practices, environments and forms of life. At the same time, he does not therefore advance an "anything goes" philosophy. James (1907) observed that we have long employed additional criteria to deal with matters that cannot be adjudicated by evidence alone—namely the same benchmarks scientists use: elegance, economy, explanatory power and coherence with other beliefs, to list a few. These standards conduce to actionability or workability, and they can be quite rigorous, with James adding that "the squeeze is so tight that there is little loose play to hold just any hypothesis" (p. 217). James did not, however, develop his philosophy to defend a specific religious standpoint as true. Instead, he tried to expand the range of what one has epistemic warrant to choose to accept as legitimate.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Acknowledgments: Gratitude goes to the reviewers for their constructive criticism and to an anonymous host in China for providing more than one beautiful workspace. Appreciation is extended to supportive colleagues at Pusan National University, the Berlin School of Mind and Brain and the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies. Thanks also to Maria Almendra Sotelo, a research assistant who has expanded my knowledge of Indigenous South American traditions.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Allen, Gay Wilson. 1967. *William James: A Biography*. New York: Viking Press.

Andía, Juan Javier Rivera, ed. 2019. *Non-Humans in Amerindian South America: Ethnographies of Indigenous Cosmologies, Rituals and Songs*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Bjork, Daniel W. 1988. *William James: The Center of His Vision*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Brooke, John Hedley. 1991. *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bush, Stephen. 2017. Sovereignty of the Living Individual: Emerson and James on Politics and Religion. *Religions* 8: 164. [CrossRef]

Ch'en, David. 1972. Thoreau and Taoism. In *Asian Response to American Literature*. Edited by C. D. Narasimhaiah. Delhi: Vikas, pp. 406–16.

Clark, Andy, and David J. Chalmers. 1998. The Extended Mind. *Analysis* 58: 7–19. [CrossRef]

Cleary, Thomas, trans. 1993. *The Flower Ornament Scripture*. Boston: Shambhala.

Clifford, William K. 1877. The Ethics of Belief. *The Contemporary Review* 29: 289–309.

Crippen, Matthew. 2007. The Totalitarianism of Therapeutic Philosophy: Reading Wittgenstein through Critical Theory. *Essays in Philosophy* 8: 29–55. [CrossRef]

Crippen, Matthew. 2010. William James on Belief: Turning Darwinism Against Empiricistic Skepticism. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 46: 477–502.

Crippen, Matthew. 2011. William James and His Darwinian Defense of Freewill. In *150 Years of Evolution: Darwin's Impact on Contemporary Thought and Culture*. Edited by Mark Wheeler. San Diego: San Diego State University Press, pp. 68–89.

Crippen, Matthew. 2017. Embodied Cognition and Perception: Dewey, Science and Skepticism. *Contemporary Pragmatism* 14: 112–34. [CrossRef]

Crippen, Matthew. 2018. Pragmatism and the Valuative Mind. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 54: 341–60. [CrossRef]

Crippen, Matthew. 2021a. Aesthetics and Action: Situations, Emotional Perception and the Kuleshov Effect. *Synthese* 198 S9: 2345–63. [CrossRef]

Crippen, Matthew. 2021b. Africapitalism, Ubuntu, and Sustainability. *Environmental Ethics* 43: 235–59. [CrossRef]
Crippen, Matthew. 2022. Emotional Environments: Selective Permeability, Political Affordances and Normative Settings. *Topoi* 41: 917–29. [CrossRef]
Crippen, Matthew. 2023a. Chinese Thought and Transcendentalism: Ecology, Place and Conservative Radicalism. *Religions* 14: 570. [CrossRef]
Crippen, Matthew. 2023b. Richard Shusterman, *Ars Erotica: Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love*. *Society* 60: 279–284. [CrossRef]
Crippen, Matthew. 2025a. Anticipating and Enacting Worlds: Moods, Illness and Psychobehavioral Adaptation. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 24: 1079–103. [CrossRef]
Crippen, Matthew. 2025b. Selective permeability and situated cognitive harm in multicultural classrooms. *Topoi* 44: 457–75. [CrossRef]
Crippen, Matthew. 2025c. The Emergence, Loss, and Reemergence of Individuated Self: Aesthetic Flow and Narrative in Self-Illness Ambiguity. *Philosophical Explorations*. Advance online publication. [CrossRef]
Crippen, Matthew, and Jay Schulkin. 2020. *Mind Ecologies: Body, Brain and World*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Crippen, Matthew, Maria Almendra Sotelo, and Dana Jang. 2025. Should I stay or should I go? An analysis of the selective permeability of Busan. *Kritike* 18: 5–36. [CrossRef]
Darwin, Charles. 1859. *On the Origin of Species*. London: John Murray.
Dawkins, Richard. 2006. *The God Delusion*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
Deloria, Vine Jr. 2003. *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion*, 30th Anniversary ed. Golden: Fulcrum Publishing.
DeMallie, Raymond J. 1984. *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
Dennett, Daniel. 2006. *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*. New York: Viking.
de Oliveira, Stephanie, and Richard E. Nisbett. 2017a. Beyond East and West: Cognitive Style in Latin America. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 48: 1554–77. [CrossRef]
de Oliveira, Stephanie, and Richard E. Nisbett. 2017b. Culture Changes How We Think about Thinking: From "Human Inference" to "Geography of Thought". *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 12: 782–90. [CrossRef]
Dewey, John. 1916. *Essays in Experimental Logic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Dewey, John. 1925. *Experience and Nature*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company.
Dreyfus, Georges. 1997. *Recognizing Reality: Dharmakīrti's Philosophy and Its Tibetan Interpretations*. Albany: SUNY Press.
Ecklund, Elaine Howard. 2010. *Science vs. Religion: What Scientists Really Think*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Elstein, David, trans. 2014. The Rafter Dialogue, by Fazang. In *Readings in Later Chinese Philosophy: Han to the 20th Century*. Justin Tiwald, and Bryan Van Norden, eds. Indianapolis: Hackett, pp. 80–86.
Emerson, Ralph Waldo. 1836. *Nature*. Boston: James Munroe & Co.
ESV, trans. 1972. *The Holy Bible in Four Translations: Containing the Old and the New Testaments*. New York: Iversen-Norman Associates.
Evans, Rand Boyd. 1990. William James and His Principles. In *Reflections on "The Principles of Psychology": William James after a Century*. Edited by Michael G. Johnson and Tracy B. Henley. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 11–31.
Finkelstein, David Ritz. 2003a. Emptiness and Relativity. In *Buddhism and Science: Breaking New Ground*. Edited by B. Alan Wallace. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 365–86.
Finkelstein, David Ritz. 2003b. Physical Process and Physical Law. In *Physics and Whitehead: Quantum, Process, and Experience*. Edited by Timothy E. Eastman and Hank Keeton. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 180–86.
Foust, Matthew. 2017. *Confucianism and American Philosophy*. Albany: SUNY Press.
Gandhi, Mohandas. 1925. Prayer. *Young India: A Weekly Journal* 7: 331–32.
Geaney, Jane. 2000. Chinese Cosmology and Recent Studies in Confucian Ethics: A Review Essay. *Journal of Religious Ethics* 28: 451–70. [CrossRef]
Graham, Angus, trans. 1960. *The Book of Lieh-tzu*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Greenwald, Jeff. 2025. Preservation or Exploitation? *Craftsmanship Magazine*. Available online: https://craftsmanship.net/sidebar/preservation-or-exploitation/ (accessed on 26 June 2025).
Gyekye, Kwame. 1995. *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
Haleem, Muhammad Abdel, trans. 2008. *The Qur'an*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Hallen, Barry. 2006. *The Good, the Bad, and the Beautiful: Discourse about Values in Yoruba Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Harris, Sam. 2004. *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company.
Harrison, Peter. 2015. *The Territories of Science and Religion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Harvey, Graham. 2006. *Animism: Respecting the Living World*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Heidegger, Martin. 1971. The Origin of the Work of Art. In *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row, pp. 17–86. First published 1960.
Hitchens, Christopher. 2007. *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. New York: Twelve.

Hitchens, Christopher, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Daniel C. Dennett. 2019. *The Four Horsemen: The Conversation that Sparked an Atheist Revolution*. New York: Random House.
Hume, David. 2000. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Edited by David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton. Oxford: Oxford University Press. First published 1740.
James, William. 1865a. Lectures on the Elements of Comparative Anatomy. *North American Review* 100: 290–98.
James, William. 1865b. The Origin of the Human Races. *North American Review* 101: 261–63.
James, William. 1878a. Brute and Human Intellect. *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 12: 236–76.
James, William. 1878b. Remarks on Spencer's Definition of Mind. *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 12: 1–18.
James, William. 1879a. Are We Automata? *Mind* 4: 1–22. [CrossRef]
James, William. 1879b. The Sentiment of Rationality. *Mind* 4: 317–46.
James, William. 1880. Great Men, Great Thoughts, and the Environment. *The Atlantic Monthly* 46: 441–59.
James, William. 1882. Rationality, Activity and Faith. *Princeton Review* 2: 58–86.
James, William. 1884. The Dilemma of Determinism. *Unitarian Review and Religious Magazine* 22: 193–224.
James, William. 1890a. *The Principles of Psychology*. New York: Henry Holt, vol. I.
James, William. 1890b. *The Principles of Psychology*. New York: Henry Holt, vol. II.
James, William. 1895a. Is Life Worth Living? *International Journal of Ethics* 6: 1–24. [CrossRef]
James, William. 1895b. The Knowing of Things Together. *Psychological Review* 2: 105–24. [CrossRef]
James, William. 1897. *The Will to Believe, and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*. New York: Longmans, Green, and Co.
James, William. 1902. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York: Longmans.
James, William. 1903. Address. In *The Centenary of the Birth of Ralph Waldo Emerson as Observed in Concord, May 25, 1903*. Cambridge: Printed at the Riverside Press for the Social Circle in Concord, pp. 67–77.
James, William. 1904a. A World of Pure Experience. *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 1: 533–43. [CrossRef]
James, William. 1904b. Does 'Consciousness' Exist? *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 1: 477–91. [CrossRef]
James, William. 1907. *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*. New York: Longmans.
James, William. 1909. *A Pluralistic Universe*. New York: Longmans.
James, William. 1911. *Some Problems of Philosophy*. New York: Longmans.
Ji, Li-Jun, Yanjie Su, and Richard E. Nisbett. 2001. Culture, prediction, and change. *Psychological Science* 12: 450–56. [CrossRef]
Kitayama, Shinobu, Hyekyung Park, Timur Sevincer, Mayumi Karasawa, and Ayse Uskul. 2009. A cultural task analysis of implicit independence: Comparing North America, Western Europe, and East Asia. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97: 236–55. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
Lakatos, Imre. 1978. *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes: Philosophical Papers*. Edited by John Worrall and Gregory Currie. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, vol. 1.
Latour, Bruno. 2005. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Lau, Din Cheuk, trans. 1972. *Tao Te Ching [Daodejing]*. London: Penguin.
Li, Xian, and Fuming Wei. 2023. What Confucian Eco-Ethics Can Teach Us about Solving the Dilemma of Interpreting the Concept of Sustainability. *Religions* 14: 1216. [CrossRef]
Mann, Charles. 2005. *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*. New York: Knopf.
Matilal, Bimal Krishna. 1986. *Perception: An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Mbiti, John S. 1990. *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Heinemann.
McGrath, Alister E. 2010. *Science and Religion: A New Introduction*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
Menand, Louis. 2001. *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Mendes, A. 2022. William James and the Deepest South. *Transatlantica. Revue D'études Américaines. American Studies Journal* 1: 1–18. [CrossRef]
Miller, Barbara Stoler, trans. 1986. *The Bhagavad-Gita*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Muller, Charles, Jin Park, and Sem Vermeersch, trans. 2012. *Wonhyo: Selected Works*. A. Charles Muller, ed. Seoul: Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism.
Nisbett, Richard. 2003. *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently...and Why*. New York: Free Press.
Perry, Ralph Barton. 1935a. *The Thought and Character of William James: As Revealed in Unpublished Correspondence and Notes, Together with His Published Writings, vol. 1: Inheritance and Vocation*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
Perry, Ralph Barton. 1935b. *The Thought and Character of William James: As Revealed in Unpublished Correspondence and Notes, Together with His Published Writings, vol. 2: Philosophy and Psychology*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
Petrunić, Tamara. 2009. W.K. Clifford and the Ethics of Belief. *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 26: 335–48.
Powers, William K. 1987. *Oglala Religion*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
Pratt, Scott L. 2002. *Native Pragmatism: Rethinking the Roots of American Philosophy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Rahula, Walpola. 1974. *What the Buddha Taught*, Revised ed. New York: Grove Press.

Reid, Struan. 1994. *The Silk and Spice Routes: Inventions and Trade*. New York: New Discovery.
Richards, R. J. 1987. *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Richardson, Robert D. 2006. *William James: In the Maelstrom of American Modernism*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
Riepe, Dale. 1968. Emerson and the Orient. *Philosophy East and West* 18: 125–45.
Russell, Bertrand. 1997. Is There a God? In *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell, vol. 11: Last Philosophical Testament, 1943–68*. Edited by John Slater and Peter Köllner. London: Routledge, pp. 543–48. First published 1952.
Sagan, Carl. 1995. *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*. New York: Ballantine.
Schrödinger, Erwin. 1967. *What Is Life? The Physical Aspect of the Living Cell; With Mind and Matter and Autobiographical Sketches*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Shusterman, Richard. 2021. *Ars Erotica: Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Slingerland, Edward, trans. 2003. *Confucius Analects*. Indianapolis: Hackett.
Solymosi, Tibor, and John Shook. 2013. Neuropragmatism: A Neurophilosophical Manifesto. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* 5: n.p. [CrossRef]
Spencer-Rodgers, Julie, Melissa Williams, and Kaiping Peng. 2009. Cultural differences in expectations of change and tolerance for contradiction: A decade of empirical research. *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14: 296–312. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
Taylor, Eugene. 1990. William James on Darwin: An Evolutionary Theory of Consciousness. *Psychology: Perspectives and Practice* 602: 7–34. [CrossRef]
Taylor, Eugene. 1996. *William James on Consciousness Beyond the Margin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Thoreau, Henry David. 1842. Natural history of Massachusetts. *The Dial* 3: 19–41.
Van Norden, Bryan, trans. 2014. Essay on the Golden Lion, by Fazang. In *Readings in Later Chinese Philosophy: Han to the 20th Century*. Justin Tiwald, and Bryan Van Norden, eds. Indianapolis: Hackett, pp. 86–91.
Van Norden, Bryan, and Nicholaos Jones. 2019. Huayan Buddhism. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Available online: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/buddhism-huayan/ (accessed on 24 June 2025).
Versluis, Arthur. 1993. *American Transcendentalism and Asian Religions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo Batalha. 2004. Perspectival Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Equivocation. *Common Knowledge* 10: 463–84. [CrossRef]
Wang, Dave. 2021. *China and the Founding of the United States: The Influence of Traditional Chinese Civilization*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
Waters, Anne, ed. 2004. *American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
Watson, Burton, trans. 1968. *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Watson, Burton, trans. 1993. *The Lotus Sutra*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Whitt, Laurie Anne, Mere Roberts, Waerete Norman, and Vicki Grieves. 2001. Belonging to Land: Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the Natural World. *Oklahoma City University Law Review* 26: 701–74.
Willman, Marshall. 2016. Logic and Language in Early Chinese Philosophy. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Available online: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/chinese-logic-language/ (accessed on 22 March 2023).
Wilshire, Bruce. 2000. *The Primal Roots of American Philosophy: Pragmatism, Phenomenology, and Native American Thought*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.