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The Aesthetics of Experience:  
William James,  
Selective Attention, and  
Rival Religious Worldviews

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Paul J. Croce

[pcroce@stetson.edu](mailto:pcroce@stetson.edu)

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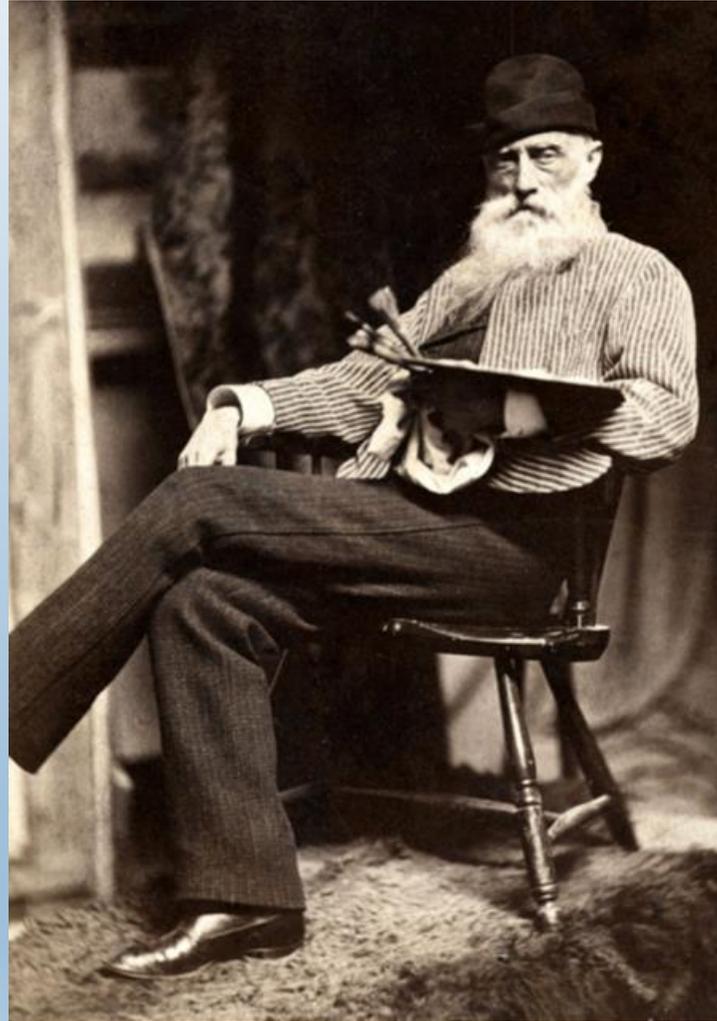
# Science without Materialism

## Philosophy as a New Program of Science by Other Means

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# William Morris Hunt, James's Art Teacher

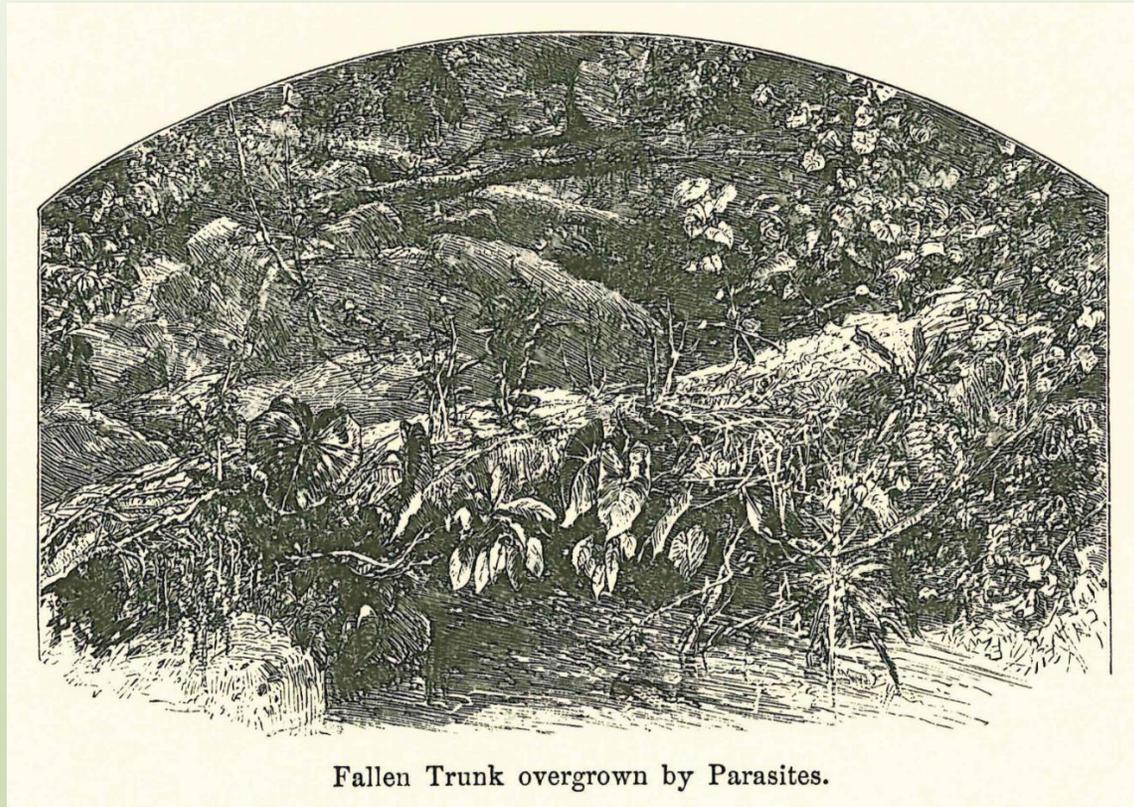
**William  
James  
“drawing,  
drawing,  
always  
drawing.”**



# Natural History, Nature's Beauty in the Brazilian Amazon: The Profusion of Life

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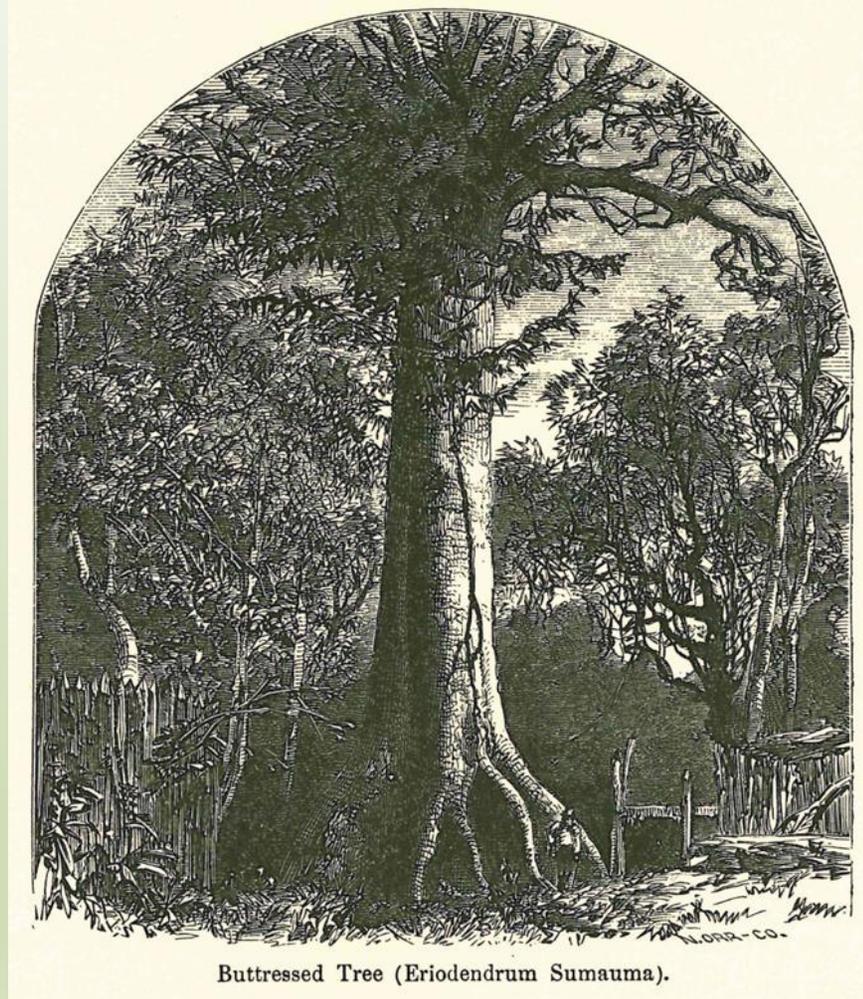
**Louis and Elizabeth Cary Agassiz, leaders of the expedition, said of this scene, “The mass of foliage is everywhere knit together by...vines without number.”**



Fallen Trunk overgrown by Parasites.

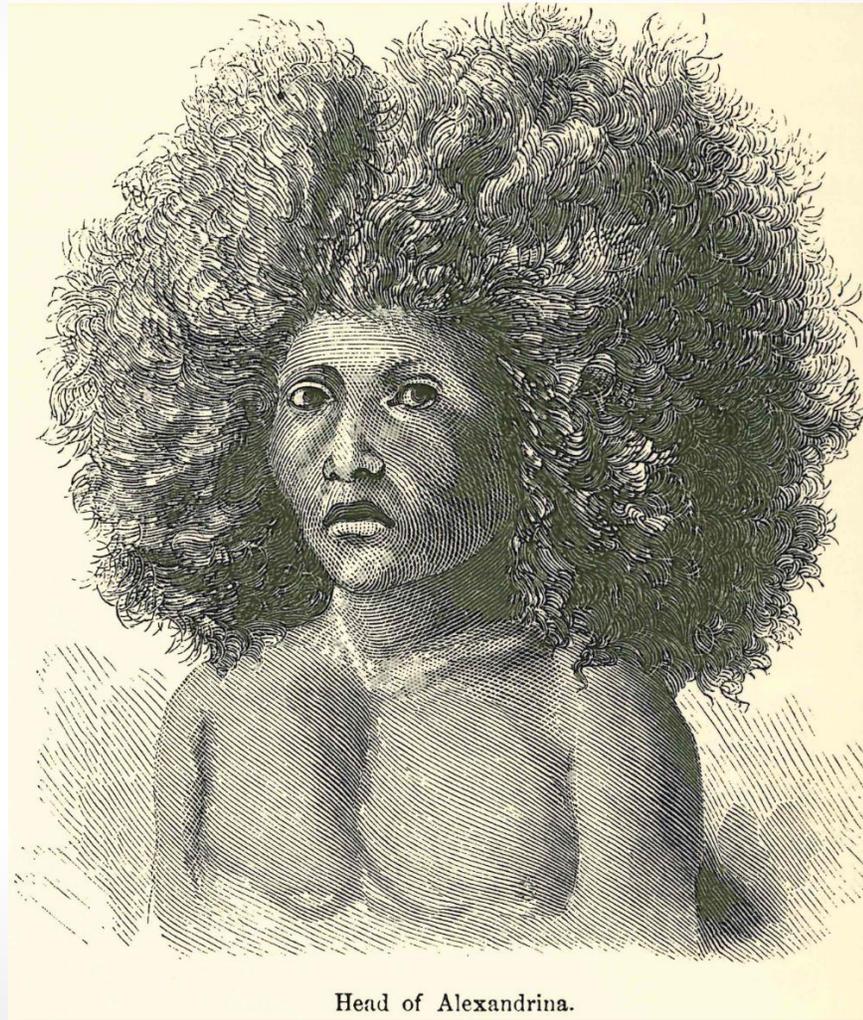
# Natural History, Nature's Beauty in the Brazilian Amazon: Trees of Enormous Size

**Buttressed Tree, also known as the Silk Cotton Tree or the Kapok, grows massive supporting buttresses, up to 30 feet high.**



# James's Sketch of Alexandrina, Native of Brazil, Assistant on the Agassiz Expedition

**Louis Agassiz, James's teacher, found her hair "extraordinary" and confirmed that James's drawing "is in no way exaggerated".**



# James's Physiology Teacher, Emil du Bois-Reymond's "Imagined...Centres of Electromotive Molecules"

**The human body on  
the model of  
physics particles.**

**James rejected his  
teacher's  
assumptions in  
favor of a "Program  
of the Future of  
Science" without  
reduction to  
materialist thinking.**



# Zwinger Palace, Dresden, Saxony

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**In 1867-1868, James stayed in Germany to learn the language and study physiological psychology. He also visited the collections of ancient and modern sculptures at the Zwinger Palace.**



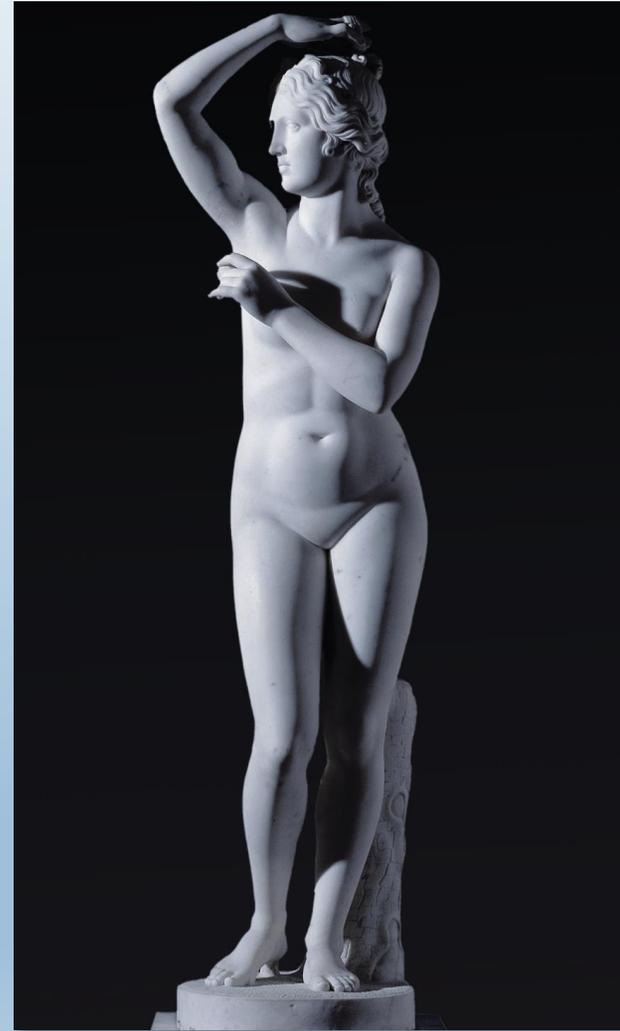
# Corridors of Sculptures in the Zwinger Leading to Michelangelo and Ernst Rietschel



# James first saw Venus Victrix (1837-1840) in September 1861 at the Boston Athenaeum

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**Richard Jenkyns, British classicist, observed that modern “nudes looked as if they had taken their clothes off, Greek ones as if they had never thought of clothes.” James, on the art, philosophy, and other cultural forms of modern times, said they “restore the fluent sense of life again, and let redemption take the place of innocence.”**



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Science and Religion  
from  
One “Common Womb”

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# William James, Self-Portrait, c. 1866

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**Young William  
James Thinking...  
The Aesthetics  
of Rationality**



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Diversity of Thought,  
with Each Position  
Rooted in Aesthetic Interest

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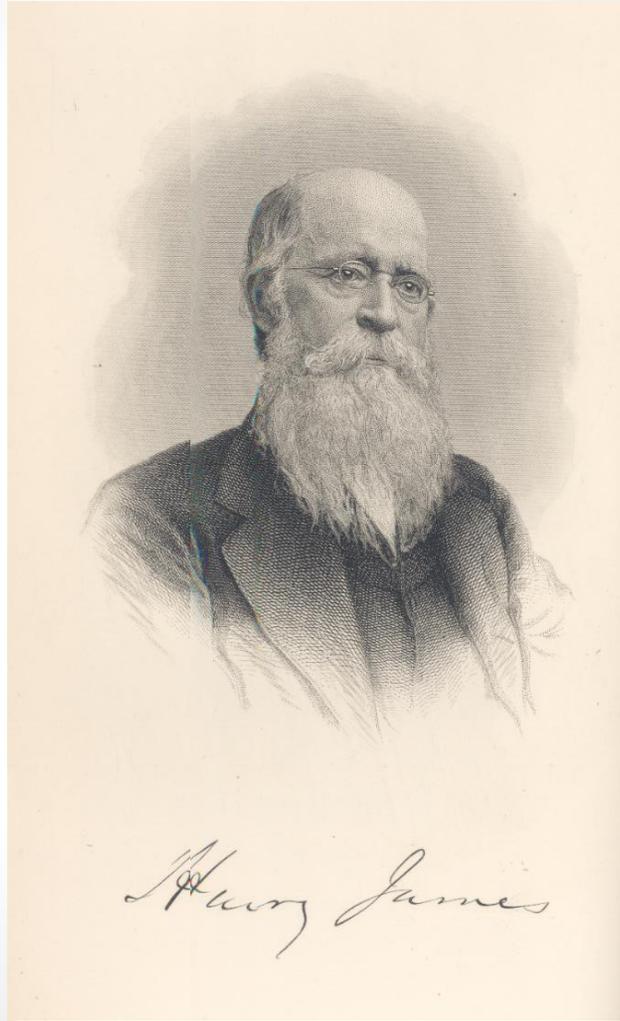
Attention:  
The Mind's Gatekeeper,  
Selecting and Ignoring

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# Henry James, Senior

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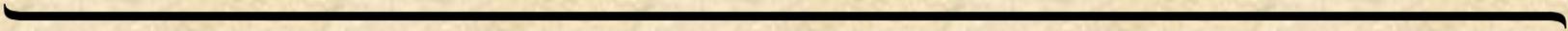
**Art embodies  
Spirit...and  
reconciles  
differences.**



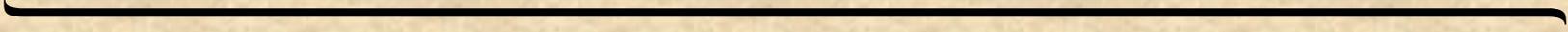
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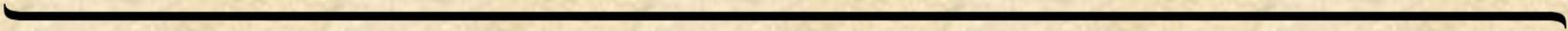
# William James on Mystery: The Elusiveness of Reality, Truth, and Other Minds

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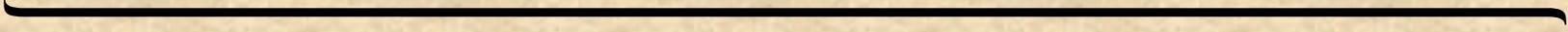


# Many (Partial) Voices



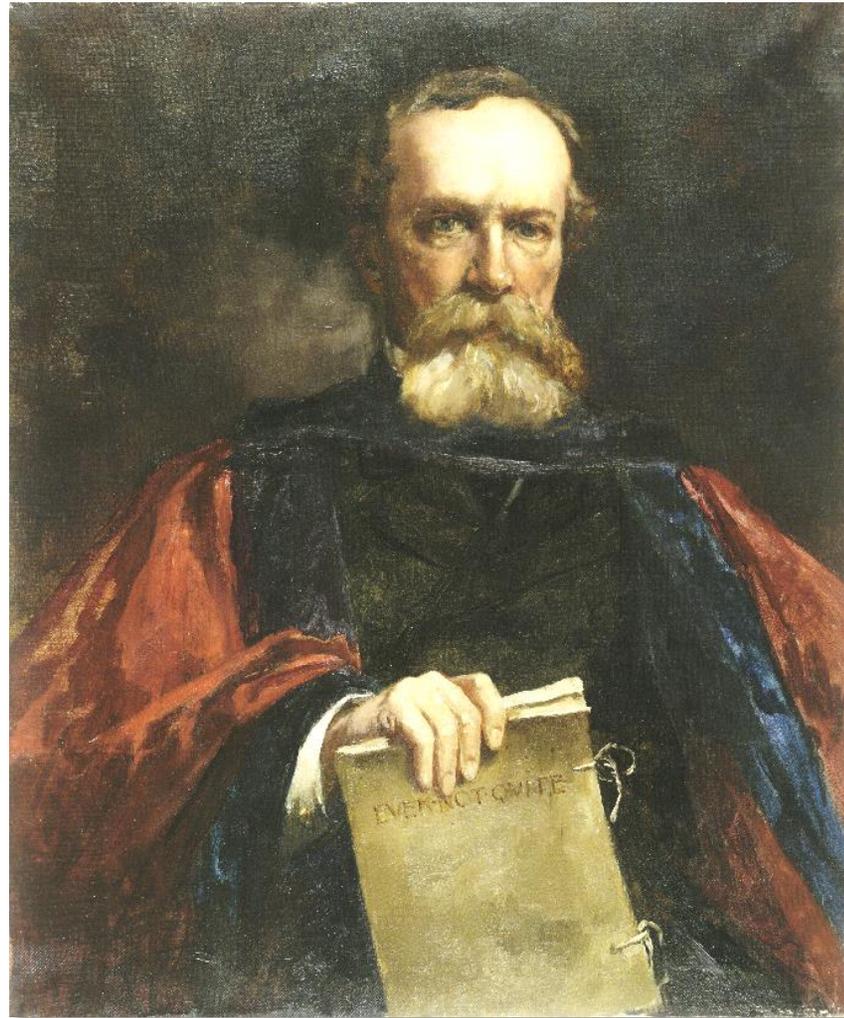


# Religion of Immanence, Religion of Transcendence



# Sarah Whitman, Portrait of William James, 1903

**Sarah Whitman  
provided an artist's  
distillation of  
James's central  
insight:  
EVER NOT QUITE**



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Religious Divisions:  
Contrasting Core Realities,  
Addressing Different Needs

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# Religion and the Subliminal: The Transcendent Within

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Emanuel Swedenborg's  
Empirical Spirituality:  
Mingling Affection and Truth

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# Young William James Thinking

## Young William James Thinking by Paul J. Croce

December 17, 2017 (available for pre-order on Amazon)

During a period of vocational indecision and deep depression, young William James embarked on a circuitous journey, trying out natural history field work, completing medical school, and studying ancient cultures before teaching physiological psychology on his way to becoming a philosopher. A century after his death, *Young William James Thinking* examines the private thoughts James detailed in his personal correspondence, archival notes, and his first publications to create a compelling portrait of his growth as both man and thinker.

A case study in coming of age, this book follows the famous American philosopher's vocational work and avocational interests, his education and his frustrations—young James between childhood and fame. Anecdotes placed in the contexts of his choices shed new light on the core commitments within his enormous contributions to psychology, philosophy, and religious studies. James's hard-won insights, starting with his mediation of science and religion, led to his appreciation of body and mind in relation. Ultimately, *Young William James Thinking* reveals how James provided a humane vision well suited to our pluralist age.

