



Essays in Radical Empiricism

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The influential philosopher's preoccupation with ultimate reality and his turn toward a metaphysical system are the focus of *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. Originally published in journals between 1884 and 1906, these 12 essays were selected by William James to illustrate the doctrine he called "radical empiricism" — a concept that made him the center of a new philosophic approach.

Proclaiming experience to be the ultimate reality, James explores the applications of experience to the problem of relations, the role of feeling in experience, and the nature of truth. He argues in favor of a pluralistic universe, denying that experience can be defined in terms of an absolute force determining the relationships between things and events. Relationships, regardless of whether they hold things together or apart, are as real as the things themselves — their functions are real, and there are no hidden factors responsible for life's harmonies and dissonances.

Seminal essays in this collection include "Does Consciousness Exist?: 'The Essence of Humanism,'" and "Absolutism and Empiricism." In addition, this edition features a new translation of "On the Notion of Consciousness" — the first English rendering of the essay, which was written in French. Indispensable to an understanding of the great philosopher's other works, this systematic and compact treatment functions equally well in and out of the classroom.

Essays in Radical Empiricism Details

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Marcus Lira says

I like the first chapter quite a lot, in which he presents consciousness as a function, and not as an entity.

David Gross says

The good parts of this I'd seen elsewhere. The rest is a lot of miscellany, including many examples of James's replies to the criticisms of other philosophers. Without the presence of the antagonists, though, these often read like overhearing one side of a telephone conversation. Oh yeah, and one of the essays is in French. So, all in all, not the favorite W.J. I've read by any means.

Illiterate says

James argues, more or less correctly, that relations and activity are part of experience, so consciousness is a function not an entity. Bye bye idealism.

Rory says

William James is an excellent writer and a giant in terms of the development of psychology and philosophy of mind at the end of the 19th century.

However, this collection of essays from 1904-1907 is a poor introduction to his Radical Empiricism.

Unnecessarily drawn out, this collection includes many disparate arguments about the philosophy of mind that are best left forgotten, there are few essays in this collection that provide genuine insights into his philosophy.

The two exceptions are (i) the first essay, 'Does Consciousness Exist' that sits very well with the most modern, materialist accounts of consciousness. (ii) Essay 13 'Controversy About Truth'.

Govnyo says

A largely forgotten book about old philosophical polemics. I only got this as I was browsing Project Gutenberg and could not think of anything better. It is not very good. Dewey was a great thinker, but this mostly covers his squabbles with other academics over subtleties in theories that are no longer particularly fashionable (I "do" philosophy and I had not heard of many of them). The style is as pompous as it gets. The

first essay has some cool bits about consciousness, but that is about it. Managed to get me through an exceptionally slow bus ride across Provence, so I guess not as bad as I make it seem.

Vladimir says

Somewhat more difficult to read than Pragmatism or Principles of Psychology. (Note to publishers: do not hesitate to translate all the Latin and German quotes.) Most of what he talks about here has been dealt with in other works, and if you are specifically interested in radical empiricism, start with A Pluralistic Universe. In this book I can only recommend essays on consciousness and pure experience. If you are new to James in general, it may be wise to start somewhere else.

nanto says

Bukan gaya bukan iseng, cuma karena dulu pernah gak bisa jawab soal ujian, "coba jelaskan pendapat anda mengenai *radical Baconian* dalam studi HI?"

Gubrak!!!

Pertanyaan yang gue gak pernah inget muncul diperkuliahan. Ato guenya yang bolos yah? Yang ada cuma garuk-garuk kepala dan memutuskan skip the question...

Iseng itu ternyata, hola kita berjumpa lagi, cuma kini melalui wajah mBah James yang pemikirannya menjadi akar dalam pragmatisme yang berkembang di Amerika sana itu. Beda sama radical Baconian gak papalah. Yang penting bisa ngejawab soal ujian yang pernah di-skip itu.
