

The Henry James Society
American Literature Association Conference
Westin Copley Place
Boston, MA
July 7-11, 2021

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Henry James Society invites abstracts for two panels. See full details below.

Illness, Society and the Self in the Life and Work of Henry James

In the context of the current viral pandemic, we look with fresh intensity at figurations of the invalid and of disease and disability in James's fictional and non-fictional writing. With an eye to the cultural and political aspects of public health measures aimed at managing the spread of an infectious pathogen, we ask in particular about the relation in James's work of sickness, subjectivity and society. How do James's texts relate social experience to bodily ill-health or impairment? Does James position the invalid as a figure indicative of dysfunction in the larger social body, or suggest, in contrast, that illness or disability may be associated with an excess of social contact, a failure of 'social distancing'? Or may we identify in James's work representations of the sick, the disabled or the dying as figures external to social networks, and therefore resistant to political or moralised interpretation?

All approaches to the topic are welcomed. Possible focuses might include:

- Health status and the question of travel
- Isolation and self-isolation in illness and/or death
- Mental health v. bodily hygiene
- 'Contagion'
- The social visibility of the pregnant woman: 'confinement' as metaphor and reality
- Doctor-patient relationships
- The space of the sick room
- Gender, disease and disability
- The 'convalescent' patient and society
- Slow declines and sudden ends: the social temporality of death

Please send 250-word proposals for 15-20-minute papers to victoria.coulson@york.ac.uk and sarah.wadsworth@marquette.edu by FEBRUARY 18, 2021. Please note if you will have AV requirements.

A Small Boy and Others: Henry James and the Child*

Children appear in James's fiction in many different kinds of roles, from the annoying little brother in *Daisy Miller* to the impressionable girl of *What Maisie Knew*. He also wrote extensively about his own childhood and those of his siblings. None of these writings are, however, for child readers, unlike the work of Lewis Carroll or Robert Louis Stevenson or Mark Twain or Louisa May Alcott. What opportunities does James find in his representations of

children? How does the development of his late style affect these possibilities? These topics are suggestions, but other approaches to the subject are invited.

- Representations of the child in the tales and novels
- Comparisons of James's child characters with the work of his predecessors and/or contemporaries
- The Victorian child and the American girl
- Autobiographical writings
- The James children in the works of other members of the family

Please send 250 word proposals to [Beverly Haviland@Brown.edu](mailto:Beverly_Haviland@Brown.edu) and Sarah.Wadsworth@Marquette.edu by JFEbruary 18, 2021. Please note if you will have AV requirements.

*NB: This panel was originally scheduled for the ALA in San Diego, May 2020. Some of the original panelists will present in Boston, but other proposals are welcome now.