

The Henry James Society

American Literature Association

35th Annual Conference

The Palmer House, Chicago

23-26 May 2024

CALL FOR PAPERS

Weird James

Sharon Cameron's *Thinking in Henry James* pointed up the weirdness of how consciousness works in his novels. She cites this example from *The Portrait of a Lady*, in which the subject of Isabel Archer's reverie suddenly appears: "The effect was strange, for Madame Merle was already so present to her vision that her appearance in the flesh was like suddenly, and rather awfully, seeing a painted picture move." In Mark Fisher's account, "the weird is constituted by a presence – the presence of that which does not belong. In some cases [...] the weird is marked by an exorbitant presence, a teeming which exceeds our capacity to represent it."

For this panel, we seek abstracts that examine how the weird manifests in or around James's writings. Also, we welcome approaches that treat the weird as a family affair: whether Henry James Sr.'s Swedenborgian musings, William James's interest in exceptional mental states, or Alice James's record of weird states of body and mind in her *Diary*. In their writings, the Jameses attend not just to the ghostly, extraordinary, or supernatural, but also to the everyday oddities of how human beings experience the world.

We welcome diverse approaches to the weird, and offer the following as possible subjects for consideration:

- States of consciousness
- Weird bodies, faces, voices
- Stylistic weirdness
- Apparitions, visitations, hauntings
- Mysticism
- Life after death, liminal states of being
- Optical illusions
- Spirit photography
- Odd coincidences
- Weird places, atmospheres, histories, legends
- The uncanny, the fantastic
- Forebodings, omens, fate, destiny
- Strange situations
- Eccentricity, strangeness, oddity, awkwardness
- The supernatural, enchantment

Please send a **250-word abstract** and **short biography** to Jane F. Thrailkill (tkill@unc.edu) and Sarah Wadsworth (sarah.wadsworth@marquette.edu) by **January 19, 2024**. Please note if you have any AV requirements. For more details about the American Literature Association Conference please visit this site: <https://americanliteratureassociation.org/ala-conferences/ala-annual-conference/>