

The Principles and Limits of Toleration

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Introduction

Approaches to education built upon an Education for All ethos often embody in unique but finite ways a principle of toleration for “differences.” Developed within a service-delivery model and against an implicit backdrop of prior practices of intolerance (remarked about in the form of lack of resources, opportunity, or awareness), the exclusivity of a site called public schooling has been once again exposed. In turn, Education for All approaches—the general idea of including all children in compulsory public schooling structures—have been critiqued for embodying liberal pluralist conceptions of rights and an almost exclusive reliance on theories of justice as distributive. While well-intended, such inclusive approaches have rarely confronted deep, historical issues of normativity-formation, biopower and nation-building, or the foreclosure of “other” co-existent models of pedagogy that do not rely upon structures that have taken shape in “the West.” Amid charges of liberal pluralism, ethnocentrism, surveillance, and the dangers of “globalization” of educational policy that critical readings of Education for All have raised, how something comes to notice as difference/sameness, inclusion/exclusion, tolerance/intolerance, etc, has often been left uncontested. It appears by default that distinctions just arise, that the principles or criteria separating sameness from difference remain implicit, perhaps simply attributed to cognition, a regularized perceptual process at work in a perceiver whose thought processes operate along mechanical lines to generate awareness of distinctions to which formulae for justice are then applied.ⁱ

This paper returns to late-nineteenth century USA in which a network was forged between principles of toleration, (re)inscription of the human and child mind, and mechanical systems of perception. It disentangles from a unique direction the underpinnings, dynamics, and limits of principles of toleration, that is to say, some onto-epistemological premises of liberal humanist philosophies that similarly pervade current Education for All strategies. Through a specific historical instance where principles of toleration were overtly elaborated in the work of William James, I outline how a concern for anti-imperialism, toleration, justice, and right to non-interference that James has come to represent embedded processes, integral to the very formation of social sciences, that might today be re-cognized as colonizing and/or imperial.ⁱⁱ

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James (1842–1910), Professor at Harvard University for several decades, is well-recognized for writing across what appears today as a range of disciplines, including those now labeled as theology, physiology, psychology, philosophy, education, psychoanalytics, medicine, and psychical science. Less recognized is his vociferous participation in the Anti-Imperialism League, founded in 1898 to protest the US invasion of Cuba and the Philippines and which Andrew Carnegie, Mark Twain, and 50,000 other Americans joined in its first few years. James reputedly stated in regard to what Tavares (in press) has called “the forgotten war”: “God damn the US for its vile conduct in the Philippine Isles!”ⁱⁱⁱ Virtually neglected beyond this in James’ enormous oeuvre is his 1899 volume *Talks to Teachers on Psychology and to Students on Some of Life’s Ideals* in which he writes into the Preface the opening plea to live and let live in regard to the Philippine invasion and discusses throughout the America he would like to see instead.

The facts and worths of life need many cognizers to take them in. There is no point of view absolutely public and universal. Private and uncommunicable perceptions always remain over, and the worst of it is that those who look for them from the outside never know *where*. The practical consequence of such a philosophy is the well-known democratic respect for the sacredness of individuality, - is, at any rate, an outward tolerance of whatever is not itself intolerant. These phrases are so familiar that they sound now rather dead in our ears. Once they had a passionate inner meaning. Such a passionate inner meaning they may easily acquire again if the pretension of our nation to inflict its own inner ideals and institutions *vi et armis* upon Orientals [*sic*] should meet with a resistance as obdurate as so far it has been gallant and spirited. Religiously and philosophically, our ancient national doctrine of live and let live may prove to have a far deeper meaning than our people now seem to imagine it to possess. (1899/1915, p. vi)

Talks was based on a series of lectures that James delivered to schoolteachers from 1892 onwards in many states. It urged an inscription of humanity as practice-oriented, as well as contained critiques beyond the Preface of the Philippine invasion. It drew heavily on his very popular two-volume *Principles of Psychology* for the content, simplifying it as he noted for his intended audience. It was spectacularly successful when published as a volume with several additional essays, being reprinted 23 times up until 1929, adopted in many undergraduate programs around the country, and becoming in those terms in the first decades of the twentieth century the single most popular teacher education text. It remains almost completely unknown and unstudied in the field of education today.

Like Education for All policies, modern principles of toleration in *Talks* and in a broader liberalism have been construed as a fundamentally *human* affair. Dependent upon a knower who is capable of perceiving and weighing multiple “facts and worths of life,” such principles have also rested on a presumption, if not conflation, between delimited forms of democracy and restricted notions of individuality. Together, the appeal to democracy, individuality, and personalized knowledge reworked and encrypted species-typical benchmarks, inscribing the central characters who morally oppose imperialism as mature human actors who have been cultured to outwardly *tolerate*.

In *Beyond Learning*, Gert Biesta raises “fundamental questions about both the *possibility* and *desirability* of the ‘strategy’ of humanism” (2006, p. 5) upon which such principles rest, asking what might follow “if we overcome the humanist foundations of modern education...in other words, how we might understand and ‘do’ education if we no longer assume that we can know the essence and nature of human being – or, to put it differently, if we treat the question of what it means to be human as a radically *open* question, a question that can only be answered by engaging in education rather than as a question that needs to be answered *before* we can engage in education” (pp. 4–5).

The question of the human is approached here as a scientific object in the making, not through the presumption of the identity of an author who can pose such a question in the first place, but rather as an effect of living and grouping practices. Through opening such a question, the limits of a contemporary ethos such as Education for All can be reviewed. My aim is not, however, to undertake that task directly, nor to suggest checklist implications for policy, nor to either elevate or pillory James. It is rather to elaborate how principles and limits of toleration, the boundaries of the human and mechanics of child mind, and processes that might today be re-cognized as colonizing and/or imperial have been reinscribed and produced through psychological and educational theories that in this instance have valorized *practice*. James popularized the term pragmatism, argued that humans have been designed for practical affairs, and lectured that human biology was directed toward functionality and adaptation. Attention to such contours of “Being” is important for unpacking how the limits of toleration could take shape in onto-epistemological hierarchies, the effort to systematize perception, and absorb the “shock of difference.” James’ writings lay at the confluence of several rivers deeply involved in shaping a valley between subject, environment, and perception, including debates over German philosophical idealism and laboratory psychology, French clinical psychoanalysis, British and Swedish Protestantisms, and the emergence of American pragmatism. In the Jamesian oeuvre, however, it is not his vociferous participation in the Anti-Imperialism League that is the most informative site for unpacking the complexity and complicity of such formations with the limits of toleration. Instead, I suggest here that a richer site lies in the minutiae of the

developmental theory and its associationist psychology— in what it meant to be a human and that kind called a child.^{iv}

Talks to Teachers

The principles and limits of toleration that take shape through James' work cannot be explicated through the usual appeals to political philosophy, law, or economy. Rather, via the qualities of the human and the mechanism of perception, both of which were elaborated in *Talks*, the complexity and complicity of such principles with their objects of critique can be discerned. In *Talks*, James draws upon three areas that he calls *psychology*, *education*, and *philosophy*, using the standard patronizing language of the time for teachers, to elaborate a mechanics of child mind. He asserts what he sees as fundamentally true, explains how it would look in classrooms and in raising infants, and disarticulates these precepts from "speculative complications" to which he cannot fully commit one way or another.

Reinscribing the Human: Theory of Development and Associationist Psychology

The sequence, human-mind-consciousness-rational-thought-that-is-procedural, inherited from Descartes, constituted a broader parameter of James' lectures. *Talks'* version of associationist psychology is more indebted, though, to the proto-typical forms found in Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*, an attribution that James makes across his writings. Associationist theories argued generally that sensation of things was the primary route to knowledge-production, that sensing something through (the now) five portals led to the formation of simple ideas which then become grouped into complex ones. The associationist theories of the late 1800s were radically modified by the advent of Darwin's evolutionary theory, its appropriation into various forms of Social Darwinism (e.g., Spencer, Galton), and the difficulties that early psychologists had reconciling Protestant theologies with mammalian ontologies. The theory of association James described was interpenetrated by such broader concerns, operating in terms of its "internal" logic via appeals to *sensation*, *consciousness*, *focus/margin*, and *substitution-inhibition*. In *Talks*, James argues that "an associational constitution" is natural, that is, inborn—"we" arrive in a condition ready to associate new with old. Noticing something is thus entirely indebted to what has already been noticed—it cannot be otherwise for James. This is grounded in a biologic conception of Man. Four reasons that a biologic conception of man is unavoidable and what its acceptance permits are elaborated, namely that "We cannot escape our destiny, which is practical; and even our most theoretic faculties contribute to its working out (pp. 25-6)." The (normal) infant under such a theory of associationism that is now sensational and biologic is portrayed as "a behaving organism," not as a Lockean

gentleman-in-waiting. The child is comported out of a narrative of historical evolution, and a concern for excess, complexity, machinery, and biology.

Man, we now have reason to believe, has been evolved from *infra-human ancestors, in whom pure reason hardly existed*, if at all, and whose mind, so far as it can have had any function, would appear to have been an organ for adapting their movements to the impressions received from the environment, so as to escape the better from destruction. *Consciousness* would thus seem in the first instance to be nothing of a sort of *super-added biological perfection*,—useless unless it prompted to *useful* conduct, and inexplicable apart from that consideration. *Deep in our own nature the biological foundations of our consciousness persist*, undisguised and undiminished. Our sensations are here to attract us and to deter us...Whatever of transmundane metaphysical insight or of practically inapplicable aesthetic perception or ethical sentiment we may carry in our interiors might at this rate be regarded as only part of the *incidental excess of function* that necessarily accompanies the working of every *complex machine*. (pp. 23-4; emphasis added)

James argues against the kind of associationist psychology built around the idea of *faculties* (as per Locke). He explains the difference, for instance, around how one would understand *memory*: “if by faculty, you mean *a principle of explanation of our general power* to recall, your psychology is empty. The associationist psychology, on the other hand, gives an explanation of the general faculty” (p. 117; emphasis added). As such, the laws of association govern all trains of thinking: “Whatever appears in the mind must be introduced; and, when introduced, it is as the associate of something already there. This is as true of what you are recollecting as it is of everything else you think of” (pp. 118–9). Memory is in this sequence indissociable from *thinking*: “the art of remembering is the art of *thinking*; and...when we wish to fix a new thing in either our own mind or a pupil’s, our conscious effort should not be so much to *impress* and *retain* it as to *connect* it with something else already there. The connecting *is* the thinking; and if we attend clearly to the connection, the connected thing will certainly be likely to remain within recall” (p. 169; original emphasis). He explains the ramifications of such theories for teachers: early psychologists considered all deeds in terms of will, with everything going through the “intermediation of this superior agent.” But now this doctrine had been exploded by discovery of the reflex action.

The fact is that there is no sort of consciousness whatever, be it sensation, feeling, or idea, which does not directly and of itself tend to discharge into some motor effect. The motor

effect need not always be an outward stroke of behavior. It may be only an alteration of the heart-beats or breathing, or a modification of the distribution of blood, such as blushing or pale, tears etc. But in any case it is there in some shape when any consciousness is there; and a belief as fundamental as any in modern psychology is the belief at last attained that conscious processes of any sort, conscious processes merely as such, *must* pass over into motion, open or concealed. (pp. 170–71)

Ideas and feelings arising internally, such as out of memories, can constitute a “sensible impression” here as much as externally arising sensations, such as touching a cold surface with the fingers. This is important for the theory of association overall—the “inner” and the “outer” provide raw data that become associated in consciousness—an argument that is naturalized in James but that was subjected to vociferous debate amid the early 1800 dissections of the brain and nervous system (Richardson, 2001). The key is that by the time James wrote, inside and outside could “both” play significant roles in terms of conditions of proof. However, the new relationship between body (as both observable behavior and interior physiology) and mind (consciousness-as-thoughts in a sequence or associative chain) does position body and physiological measures as the legible surface and final arbiter in the early phases of child development at least, for conscious processes *must* pass over into motion-as-change.

Significantly, consciousness is always already going on: “Now the *immediate* fact which psychology, the science of mind, has to study is also the most general fact. It is the fact that in each of us, when awake (and often when asleep), *some kind of consciousness is always going on*. There is a stream, a succession of states, or waves, or fields (or whatever you please to call them), of knowledge, of feeling, of desire, of deliberation, etc., that constantly pass and repass, and that constitute our inner life (p. 15).” The “first general fact” is “We thus have *fields of consciousness*” and the “second general fact” is “that the concrete fields are always complex” (p. 17). Consciousness was, in turn, understood through the dynamics of proximity-impression and focus/margin. Because consciousness *is always going on* the proximity of any thing means it can (somehow) leave impressions, get “in” there even if one remains unaware that it “got in.”

Immediately following the stream of consciousness discussion in *Talks* a focus/margin distinction is raised. James uses focus and center synonymously, the former more frequently, to depict how consciousness shifts—the same thing can be focal or marginal depending on the state. He takes this as so evident that the expressions focal object and marginal object “require no further explanation” (p. 17). Consciousness *is not possible without sensation* and accompanies it for

the most part “In most of our fields of consciousness there is a core of sensation that is very pronounced” (p. 17). Thus, the theory of consciousness cannot survive without an appeal to sensation *and* to a focus/margin distinction. The recombinatorial tendencies of focus/margin *are native to humans*, i.e., humans *as* and *having* associational constitutions are pre-programmed for a focus/margin distinction and for the relation between them to shift in numerous but not infinite ways.

Last for the purposes here, the sequence: human—biologic—associational constitution—sensation—memory-consciousness-thought—focus/ margin is rounded out by the theory of substitution-inhibition. James provides a very specific audit trail for how to teach an infant a desired behavior over the top of an already existing unwanted one. The biology of adaptation makes substitution possible and thus helps to redefine education as reaction: “Man is an organism for reacting on impressions: his mind is there to help determine his reactions, and the purpose of his education is to make them numerous and perfect. *Our education means, in short, little more than a mass of possibilities of reaction, acquired at home, at school, or in the training of affairs. The teacher’s task is that of supervising the acquiring process*” (p. 37). The principle which underlies this and governs the entire activity of teaching is italicized: “*Every acquired reaction is, as a rule, either a complication grafted on a native reaction, or a substitute for a native reaction, which the same object originally tended to provoke. The teacher’s art consists in bringing about the substitution or complication, and success in the art presupposes a sympathetic acquaintance with the reactive tendencies natively there*” (p. 37).

It is particularly here, in the shift from a broader associationist and sensationist psychology into fine-grained elaboration of modes of substitution, that the complex relation between Jamesian philosophical psychology and the contours of processes now suggestive of the colonizing and/or the imperial arise. I will elaborate this below but for now it is important to distill the theory of pedagogy. James uses the example of how to teach an infant to beg for a toy instead of snatching as an instance of substitution. The native (child) has to come to you for something desirous. Then you have “knowledge of” them, construed, and this is a key leap, as *control*, and the educative process can begin, but not without some biological struts: “Now, if the child had no memory, the process would not be educative.” Memory allows elimination of all the intermediary steps; it permits substitution of nice begging for snatching, inhibits the snatch response, and redirects the infant to obtain the toy through the adult’s authority. Inhibition is tied to a notion of efficiency and memory. A series of brain-diagrams illustrate how centers of memory and will facilitate the final substitution, in the process inscribing the infant’s ontology with the key couplets of becoming governable before school is begun: see-s snatch; slap-cry; listen-beg; get-smile (p. 40).

The post-education inhibition and efficiency of response achieved is key to the determination of success—the child will always beg the adult for the thing desired rather than go through the above couplets each time: “The first thing, then, for the teacher to understand is the native reactive tendencies,—the impulses and instincts of childhood,—so as to be able to substitute one for another, and turn them on to artificial objects” (p. 43). The native reactions of fear, love, curiosity, imitation, emulation, ambition, pugnacity, pride, ownership, constructiveness are dual-edged, both necessary for the supplement that education is and a site of danger if left unabated: “acquired reactions must be made habitual whenever they are appropriate” suggesting the significance of mechanism of habit, association, apperception, interest, attention, memory, and especially will (p. 63), and giving meaning to what James calls “superior reasoning power.” What demarcates Man from animal turns, then, on this relation between “the higher functions” which permit substitution, memory, and reproduction of a begging action rather than snatching. If these higher functions are absent or deemed compromised, the lower instincts take over.

In sum, *Talks* both extends and rearranges somewhat the Cartesian sequence: To be human = having an associational constitution = to be educable = organizing tendencies as habits of behavior = apperceiving = naming things = detecting possible conflicts/tensions between new and old things named = needing an act of will to decide the outcome = enlarging of practical mind = basis from which higher psychic faculties may then spring. In the innocuous sounding description of children: “I cannot but think to apperceive your pupil as a little sensitive, impulsive, associative, and reactive organism, partly fated and partly free, will lead to better intelligence of all his ways. Understand him, then, as such a subtle little piece of machinery. And if, in addition, you can also see him *sub specie boni*, and love him as well, you will be in the best possible position for becoming perfect teachers” (p. 190) were formed new horizons of the political dedicated to perfection of organismic status, including introspective states, and control of perceived external flux.

Native Informant/s: That-Which and Who-That

To disentangle how the principles and limits of toleration might be understood in relation to (re)inscription of the human, of perceptual development attributed to child mind, and the elevation of the practical as apex of maturity, the “laws of operation” that had to be in place before the above “laws of association” could ever be named as such are important to distill. The pluralist, apparently open, and flexible cosmology for which James is famous, prefigured in his “outward tolerance for whatever is not itself intolerant” and in his critiques of imperialism, science, the Absolute, and monism relied for their appeal to heteronomy, second-order normativity, and introspection upon the operation of “native informant/s.” In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of*

the Vanishing Present Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues that in different ways in Kant, Hegel, and Marx, a projection of native informant(s)^{vi} operates unacknowledged, as a site of unlisted traces:

Increasingly, there is the self-marginalizing or self-consolidating migrant or postcolonial masquerading as a “native informant.”...The texts I read are not ethnographic and therefore do not celebrate this figure. They take for granted that the “European” is the human norm and offer us descriptions and/or prescriptions. And yet, even here, the native informant is needed and foreclosed. In Kant he is needed as the example for the heteronomy of the determinant, to set off the autonomy of the reflexive judgment, which allows freedom for the rational will; in Hegel as evidence for the spirit’s movement from the unconscious to the consciousness; in Marx as that which bestows normativity upon the narrative of the modes of production. These moves, in various guises, still inhabit our attempts to overcome the limitations imposed on us by the newest division of the world, to the extent that, as the North continues ostensibly to “aid” the South—as formerly imperialism “civilized” the New World—the South’s crucial assistance to the North in keeping up its resource-hungry lifestyle is forever foreclosed....To steer ourselves through the Scylla of cultural relativism and the Charbydis of nativist culturalism regarding this period, we need a commitment not only to narrative and counternarrative, but also to the rendering (im)possible of (another) narrative. (2000, p. 6)

The normativity, heteronomy-indeterminacy, and movements between conscious and unconscious that appear within an associationist system can be traced through an *epistrophé* carried on the back of projected characters (Sells, 1994)^{vii}—the emanation-return of native informant/s simultaneously projected and coming back with messages and/or tasks performed. At least two such projections can be outlined here: native informant/s projected as blackness (that-which) and as feeble intellects (who-that).

The projections of blackness that lent whiteness a rarefied organismic status are encrypted in the evolutionary theory, securing caste-formation in regard to educability. They become present as whispers, shaping political horizons through the text’s turns around what constitutes biology and reason, operating as that-which enables a series to be recognized *as* a series. The assumption of developmental levels bequeathed by processes of evolution and presumed embodied, the gradients between the levels and their sequencing, the appeal to

inborn nature and that which is fixed, speak the unspoken raciology (Gilroy, 2001). The emanation that *is* the return becomes apparent where and when such “characters” are placed to the negative side of that which they are used to construct. Moreover, such projected native informant/s seem to return as though from an exterior, as though outside, traveling back across the borders established between the eye and the world, only to blur what is inner and outer—“infra-human ancestors” are to be understood via evolutionary theory as characters reminiscent of a previous age, and residing now in “everyone’s” growth and development as the primordial stage. “They” operate implicitly, then, as both outside objects of perception, commonsensically visible on the street and in textbooks, and inside as incitement to progress, at least, as the theory went, for those whose programming allowed for it. Such native informant/s became, then, un-subjects with four main roles: help establish the poles that sequence evolution, position sensation as the primordial site of knowledge-production, turn the practical (biologically conceived as ability to sense and evade environmental crisis and hence survive) into the apex of educatedness, and make the origins of consciousness appear unclear/invisible by visibly occupying the origin of human evolution as the clearly marked “black body.”

In terms of shouts, it is the overt naming of feeble-mindedness, which included both feeble intellects and lunacy, that bring reworked racializing distinctions into a new relation with dis/ability and nation-formation.^{viii} Native informant/s cast as feeble-minded generate instability, between being raced and beyond race, between dependence and independence, troubling the neatness of racializing binaries. This liminality arises particularly in that awkward form, the feeble intellect—not so mad as to be mad, not so sane as to be left completely alone—a native informant whose naming marks a crossover point between the coining of the term eugenics in 1888 (Galton) and the major international eugenics conferences of the first decade of the new century. James’ *Talks* is written in the middle of this period, the invention and “working out” of the “menace of the feeble-minded” (Trent, 1994). Such native informant/s bear double movements—the feeble-minded as both belonging to “the” race as sickly whiteness and subject of welfare, and the mad as beyond race, as altogether irredeemable and unclassifiable beyond the designation of madness—no other adjectives needed.

In law courts no *tertium quid* is recognized between insanity and sanity. If sane, a man is punished: if insane, he is acquitted; and it is seldom hard to find two experts who will take opposite views of his case. All the while, nature is more subtle than our doctors. Just as a room is neither dark nor light absolutely, but might be dark for a watchmaker’s uses, and yet light enough to eat in or play in, so a man may be sane for some purposes and insane for others,—sane enough to be left at large, yet not sane enough to take care of his financial

affairs. The foreign terms “disequilibré,” “hereditary degenerate,” and “psychopathic” subject, have arisen in response to the same need. (James, 1899/1915, p. 164)

The heredity degenerate, fully-fledged as a lower kind of human in the text, announces what the first consideration of child development— efficiency— means i.e., doing what one is “fitted for.” This, in turn, can only be done where it is understood that full development is secured via *memory plus philosophical mind*. The nativity of mind, its always already being something appointed or endowed with a seed that limits the extent of development possible at birth, not only recreates castes of educability, but enables the feeble intellect to overtly shape recognition of the normal especially in regard to *memory*. Feeble intellects are: “found in those who have almost no desultory memory at all. If they are also deficient in logical and systematizing power, we call them simply feeble intellects; and no more need to be said about them here. Their brain-matter, we may imagine, is like a fluid jelly, in which impressions may be easily made, but are soon closed over again, so that the brain reverts to its original indifferent state” (p. 122). James return to such intellects many times in *Talks*, never quite able to leave them behind. The depth of their work becomes clearer as the microphysics of memory is elaborated. This appears most evident in the definition of education. Education consists “in organizing of *resources* in the human being, of powers of conduct which shall fit him to his social and physical world” and “An ‘uneducated’ person is one who is nonplussed by all but the most habitual situations. On the contrary, one who is educated is able practically to *extricate* himself, by means of the examples with which his *memory* is stored and of the *abstract* conceptions which he has acquired, from *circumstances in which he never was placed before*. Education, in short, cannot be better described than by calling it *the organization of acquired habits of conduct and tendencies to behavior*” (p. 29; emphasis added). This process can only take place, however, under propitious circumstances—the gap between the subject as such and the infant or child can only be bridged by “culture” where “nature” has allowed. Nature needs culture, but cannot be produced by it—that production lies instead with what Spivak (2000, p. 15) calls the “empirico-psychological reflexes” of lesser-than-subjects who-constitute the internal divisions of educatedness and “mess up” the polar racializing ones, who reveal the limits of culture, and purify the realm of nature, precisely via their “pollutive” presence.

Last, the couplets that implicitly hold up the strata already existing in castes of educability are reasserted through the term *practical*—without sensation, the ability to know the rest of the world is compromised: “No one believes more strongly than I do that what our senses know as ‘this world’ is only one portion of our mind’s total environment and object. Yet, because it is the primal portion, it is the *sine qua non* of all the rest” (p. 25). The native informant/s projected as feeble-minded return, too, then to occupy the negative side of that which they

help *routinize within the series*. Thus, such informant/s perform three main roles: trouble the passage of linear time as meaning progressive improvement, mess up the neatness of racializing binaries, and illustrate how the mechanical system of mind-formation and perception operate as routinized by becoming its failure.

In sum, whereas the native informant/s projected as blackness establish the poles upon which a series can be identified as a series, the native informant/s projected as feebleminds indicate how the series works by interrupting it, as wayward and sometimes even worse as morbid. The former native informant/s set historic time, while the latter erupt as untimely, as too-early reminders of mortality, as perturbations that threaten the ordering of the future. As Spivak notes, this invocation of linear time is crucial to resecuring the exclusivity of the narrator, of who can occupy the place of theory-builder: “Time often emerges as an implicit Graph only miscaught by those immersed in the process of timing” (2000, p. 38).

Conclusion: From Association to Colonization?

The principles and limits of toleration in *Talks* form through both an associationist psychology and the labor of native informant/s, which together lend specificity to the possibilities for being human and for how “differences” are perceived at all. The sympathy for “external” (international) forms of injustice that James attends to is in part made possible by the acceptance and obfuscation of “internal” (domestic) forms—the onto-epistemological lens travels and normalizes so that the biological, practical, self-governing human thought invaded by other nations remains built upon gradations accepted at home. Insofar as James asserts that “variety in unity being the secret of all interesting talk and thought” (p. 112), then, one might argue that very specific strategies of foundation operate at the site of production of associationist claims to pluralism, indeterminacy, and variety. This is precisely the apparent double-edged sword that difference as configured through appeals to a universal “raw man” as Spivak (2000) puts it would suggest. The second-order normativity around raw man and the role of native informant/s in shaping His humanity discourages questioning of the racializing and ableizing foundations of master narratives, such as Social Darwinistic evolutionary theory, even as one, such as James, critiques its impact elsewhere on Protestant beliefs. His “I invite you to seek with me some principle to make our tolerance less chaotic” (p. 268) means that such an associationism can never realize a strident critique of the Philippine invasion, of non-interference with others, because the theory of mind-body that grounds the philosophy of character-formation has already determined what an other is in order for “it” to be recognizable as such (i.e., new can only be recognized in terms of old). The others of external nations, the “Orientals” in this case, have already been interfered with so to speak by the liberal pluralist

and humanist structure of the complaint, by cutting off the possibility of *not having to say "No!"*, of *not having to engage at all* in refuting the deep normativities embedded in appeals to human practicality, democratic self-governance, and critiques of their transgression.

There is in James, though, a different possibility that exceeds the liberalist dilemmas often pointed out around his work. It is not the well worn argument that a self knows what it is simply by what it is not. Nor is it that the self is constituted by projecting an other who it then uses to reconstitute its self—the standard critique of mainstream anthropology which Spivak (2000) turns on its head and redeploys. While aspects of both these swirl through his writing, there is something other again in James that has to do with the idea that self is a *collective* concept in some of his work (Latour, 2006). The by-now familiar critiques of self/other relations and hierarchical formations indexical of critical work become more difficult to apply on two grounds: first, James provides a theory for how a self/other divide could even come into being, how it could arise in the first place, how such a distinction could be drawn *at all*. Decades later, a self/other dichotomy would be a key conceptual strut of “postcolonial critique,” among many other critical kinds. Second, when James’ theory of self-formation as *imitative* and *emulative* in the early phases of life is considered the process of subjectivity-formation becomes chicken and egg. The “self” is a collective concept in that it is formed through imitating those around us, we can only know “self” through patterns that form through imitation of other patterns, and patterns are what (normal) people are born being able to form. “Self” is not easily reducible, then, to individual—James notes the circularity when he asserts that individuality presupposes and proposes. Through education built particularly upon *rivalry* the self of a developing child will become dissociated from those around who are being imitated, and coalesce later as a distinctive mind. Precisely how the differences between minds form amid this larger process of “I” formation, James argued, is a continued mystery that psychology had not come close to explaining.

In this version of associationism, however, the presence of any “difference” leaves an impression that in the future will come to matter, come to fruition in unpredictable ways. So if you don’t want to lose the solidity of the “I,” at least that which is an acquired habit by adulthood, the wider self-as-cultured-nature, ought to be replicated—in a sense, unwittingly providing a philosophical rationale for colony-formation. This will ensure that the impressions being received apparently from “the outside” can be more easily assimilated within existing foundations of the self-as-culturednature, not rocking the boat, but traveling back to the perceiver as nice exotic twists, not so different as to disturb but a just-noticeable-difference (Fechner’s term) so as to titillate or enlarge the mind.

The slash between inner and outer that was previously constituted to give the play of difference, to make it seem that a psychological system could be affected by environment and environment by system, dissipates into one continuous and foundational reference point that can never be disturbed or substituted (system-closure), forging the deep sense of homogeneity, entrapment, and/or circularity that comes from instantiation of second-order norms around figuration of the practical human perceiver. The rewriting of nation-building as human development and perfection of capacities, with education (“organized tendencies”) as the instrument, subsequently establishes limits to what toleration can tolerate, to what can arise as a violation, contouring in advance what counts as moral character or ethical relations between “humans” living in one “nation” or another. The paradox bequeathed rather than resolved, which exceeds James, interpenetrates the formation of social sciences and the genuine concern for injustice, is the cementing of a standard mode of criticism of imperialism that relies upon a subtle, deeply colonizing, and not-so-open response to the question of the human.

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- ⁱ See J. Crary (2001).
- ⁱⁱ For the purposes of this analysis I begin with a “specter” of the imperial and/or the colonizing as involving some elements of *continuous linking and/or sequencing* that presences the dilemma of system-closure (e.g., the new can only be seen in terms of normativities already established in the old) and of *substitution* that when applied to relations of “power” can involve a range of “hard” (invasion/eradication) and “soft” (education-conversion) strategies recognized as colonizing or imperial. I have elaborated in Baker (2006) how this delimitation becomes part of the problem being critiqued. I do not claim here, then, to be outside the historical vestige of theories of perception or to not be deploying here a particular kind. This analysis remains both vehicle and effect of that which it historicizes.
- ⁱⁱⁱ This is quoted in Zinn (2003). The term nation should not be understood here as a geopolitical entity that speaks for itself (Abraham, 2006). Names of nations have to be understood in this paper as suspended, as both said and unsaid. I have elaborated the dynamic of saying and unsaying elsewhere as a performatively apophatic one. See Baker 2001 and 2006.
- ^{iv} This is a broader problematic which concepts of matter, spirit, language, rationality, critique, and culture help produce and thus not reducible to (post)humanism debates.
- ^v Associationism does not mean simply associating something randomly with something else or just making links between things. Strictly speaking, in *Talks* it means that something cannot be noticed as “new” without relating it back to an already-existing apperceptive mass in the mind. The “old” categories determine—thus noticeabilities are never completely new for James and he comments overtly on this.
- ^{vi} I use the slash (“native informant/s) and not the parantheses of Spivak’s “native informant(s)” to signal the multiple and differential roles played by that-which and who-that kinds that I identify below. The back and forth between group and singular in such projections suggests something more structurally significant to the argument about limits of the human that the slash represents.
- ^{vii} *Epistrophé* is like a projection from within, an apparent movement of an emanation and its coming back, where the emanation *is* the return—for

example, that which you thought was “outside” is understood as a projection from “inside” that you see coming back at you as though from across a border and thereby label as “outer,” “exterior,” “foreign,” or “external”—the effect in the end is labyrinthian, a confusion or non-clarity over what or whether there is an inner and outer. This, in turn, can incite even greater efforts to demarcate and classify. I have critically appropriated this concept from Sells (1994). Spivak speaks differently, drawing on Lacan, of *foreclosure*.

^{viii} I have elaborated in Baker (2001; 2006) the implications of race-sexuality, eugenics, heteronormativity, and the shift of ableization from poverty to neurophysiology in late nineteenth century psychological discourses.

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