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## RADFORD ADDRESS

# Educational Research and Strategies of World-Forming: The Globe, the Unconscious, and the Child

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### Introduction

The passion to eradicate alterity from the earth is also the passion for the home, the country, the dwelling, that authorizes this desire and rewards it. In its nationalism, parochialism and racism it constitutes a public and private neurosis. So, unwinding the rigid understanding of place that apparently permits me to speak, that guarantees my voice, my power, is not simply to disperse my locality within the wider coordinates of an ultimate planetary context. That would merely absolve me of responsibility in the name of an abstract and generic globalism, permitting my inheritance to continue uninterrupted in the vagaries of a new configuration. There is something altogether more precise and more urgent involved. For in the horror of the unhomey pulses the dread for the dispersal of Western humankind: the dread of a rationality confronted with what exceeds and slips its grasp. (Chambers, 2001, p. 196)

We live in what has been called, for several decades now, New Times – an apparent shift in sensibilities from the chronological and linear, to the spatial, the scalar, and the glocal; a mutation in political debates from matters of truth to matters of concern; a leap from the textual to the virtual, from the auditory to the visual; contracted and reduced temporalities of communication that enable expansion of horizons, everything at once more easy and more difficult, from the sturdy foundations of certitude over who we are to irreconcilable planes of rhizomatic temperament and polycentricity – coordinates lost, disorientation ensues, a new moral compass is sought.

That at least is the spin so frequently given to and as New Times. Such world-diagnosis requires its own coordinates, though: An appeal to a before and after, a here and a

there, a this and a that which structure the observabilities often left unproblematic amid current logics of perception. Under the label globalization, the humanities and social sciences have been forced to revise their thinking to find new ways to speak about the changed circumstances around us and to reorient conceptually in an apparent “world without frontiers.” Appeals to the rhetoric of globalization are reflected in shifts in our basic understanding of belonging, in the purposes attributed to education, and projections of the future. Significant shifts have already taken place in occidentalist notions of self and/or subjectivity and in the traditional framework of compulsory education, the nation-state. These shifts, in turn, affect educational policy, school reform and leadership, doctoral programs, and classroom populations. In contemporary educational research, such shifts are only marginally, but increasingly, being recognized (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Burbules & Torres, 2000; Rizvi & Lingard, 2000; Stromquist & Monkman, 2000; Suárez-Oroczo & Qin-Hilliard, 2004).

Such shifts are often posited as indexical of a noise or chaos out of which a new rational ordering must be developed. Yet, ordering and inhabiting this montage of New Times’ sensibilities are very arbitrary and delimited discursive trajectories whose logic and confusion-generating potential are linked by a quest for fixity. The problem is not one of pointing to that over and over but rather of unwinding the rigid understanding of place that is embedded in their representational strategies. Integral to the quest for fixity that sought to link place, self, and progress since the late nineteenth century in anglophone scholarship and policies, and especially to the search for subjects-objects that do not leak but that remain malleable, have been the emergence of new conceptions of world and now of globe, of an unconscious, and of the child.

This paper offers a timely revisiting of these interlinked conceptualizations, which subtly shape repetitively appearing issues that educational research now entails, confronts, and works through. For Iain Chambers (2001), such sensibilities are not tamed or resolved by splitting the analytical register simply between global and local or by more streamlined or specific explanations of place, voice, and power. This is especially problematic if global is taken to mean the dispersal of an already-dominant or privileged version of the local within wider coordinates that ensure the continuation of forms of representation and frames of reference that are familiar, privileged and/or over-exposed. This paper thus takes up the problem posed by Chambers, reapproaching a rationality confronted with what exceeds and slips its grasp, rethinking and rephrasing what education might be in the absence of a map.

The paper unfolds across three sections that are not dedicated to seeking a rhetorical unity or deepening a common core. Rather than looking exclusively at institutional structures, educational policy, or classroom-based interactions, the paper examines

strategies of world-forming, their critique, fracturation, and seepage as a site of the politics of education. In the first section, I point to some messy and numberless beginnings of a particular nexus – a modernity-science-nation-West nexus that came to operate as a new horizon of enactment and dominant template for World. This is approached through contemporary debates within and beyond postcolonial technoscience research. In the second and third sections, I examine strategies of Western world-forming within educational research that unfolded amid what Peter Wagner (1994) calls crises of modernity. Wagner describes two major crises of modernity as those moments in which tensions between liberty and discipline become more broadly exposed. The first Wagner pegs to the late 1890s, a moment in which trade union, feminist, anti-lynching, right to vote, anti-imperialist movements came to the fore. Both Fordist capitalism and Russian socialism were for Wagner different responses to very similar crises, more conjoined than oppositional, and in “both” cases the very fabric and nature of the previous social contract was rewritten. The second crisis is for Wagner keyed to the mid-1960s onwards where in different form a variety of social and academic movements erupted in an attempt to rewrite the nature of human relationships especially.

I want to examine here textual productions embedded in these two moments which at first glance may seem to bear little relation to each other and appear to sit on opposite sides of an epistemological spectrum, the one largely qualitative, anti-statistical, and pro-pluralist in its sentiments and the other largely quantitative, anti-phenomenological, and pro-managerialist in its sentiments. In the second section, then, I examine strategies of world-forming in late nineteenth century educational scholarship as it overtly lays out conceptions of World, of unconscious, and of child mind amid the delineation of a West/Orient division and in the name of renovation of the nation. Here, it is William James’ popular lecture series *Talks to Teachers on Psychology: and to Students on Some of Life’s Ideals*, delivered across the 1890s and published in 1899, that offers a window onto discursive matrices that exceed the Jamesian oeuvre. James was a vociferous member of the Anti-imperialism League as well as a famous Harvard professor of philosophy and psychology who popularized the terms stream of consciousness, pragmatism (coined by Charles Peirce), and self-esteem. *Talks* was reprinted 29 times between 1899 and 1929 and by that standard was one of the most popular social science texts of the early twentieth century US. The matrices in which it was embedded were ones where cosmos met polis and where a new map of human ontology trying to bridge old (otherworldly or “spiritual”) and new (thisworldly or “scientific”) vistas was developed as part of and response to the first crisis of modernity. In the third section of this paper, I examine something that can arguably be seen as part of and response to the second crisis of modernity: the presumptions inherent to Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and its popularization amid a broader moment in which reference to the otherworldly

seems relatively rare. Here, I suggest that globe, unconscious, and child operate in refigured form to template World as automatically Western, a situation in which polis is reduced to management, the otherworldly is abjected or privatized, and evaluation is proffered as a response to a new version of the “problem” of difference. Together, occidental philosophies of the thisworldly, mental measurement, and a discrete self converge in the fundamentalist and resuscitative role of PISA that is drawn out here not simply by looking at it but also by looking away. What links the textual productions selected here, then, are their commitment to the reenactment of modernity-science-nation-West nexus and their dedication to standardization in messy moments and what divides them are the levels at which this standardization is lodged and the strategies developed for doing so.

The issues examined here are not always entirely new, however, and are tied in the analysis to a broader and often-pre-existing philosophical debate, including why claims to modernity and certain parts of “the world” become the historiographical markers and referential vortex in sociological accounts of human and societal relations such as in Wagner and beyond. The conclusion spawns, then, some tentative speculations regarding the impact of refigurations of globe, unconscious, and child in light of the shift from absolutist to democratic forms of governance. If, as Agamben suggests, the tensions between absolutism and democracy have never been resolved, then how might one differently understand the role of education which so often likes to locate itself as in and for the world, as dealing with the growth of mind and memory, and as dedicated to the (non-voting) young?

The issues raised, then, can be thought of as currents that cut across efforts to nationalize educational discourse and to attribute a singular and propertied orientation to selves, invention, ideas, and institutional practices. I want to be clear, though, that my aim here is neither to denigrate national identification nor to celebrate it. Furthermore, the questioning is not an automatic or by default elevation of extreme individualism or proxy regionalisms. Rather, the examples release us toward new horizons for reconsideration of praxis, largely because the familiar frameworks, shores, and discourses called upon in education no longer operate as sufficient explanatory devices or docks. This historicization, delimitation, and deepening, will offer, then, I hope new opportunities for the reconsideration of educational research and ethics.

### **Strategies of World-forming: Modernity-Science-Nation-West as Horizons of Enactment**

The preparation for subjectivity conceived in terms of globality, in which belief in one World-Historical system of which human nations constitute differently located parts was

produced, unfolded along initially unrelated vectors. In a new area of research called postcolonial technoscience attention has been given to the intersection of some of those vectors whose synergetic effects were to bequeath a particularly powerful template for producing World that remains in play today. The alliance of scientific rationality, realism, and colonialism has been especially potent in staging developmentalized versions of nationhood and in dominating the conditions of proof for the assessment of progress or success. To that end, it is instructive to un-earth the matrices that have drawn modernity, science, nation and West into historical alignment and that have given energy to what Delanty and O'Mahoney call the recalcitrance of modernity/nationalism as an emotional and institutional force.

In a special edition of *Social Studies of Science* dedicated to postcolonial technoscience, Warwick Anderson (2002) argues that “Too often the ‘postcolonial’ seems to imply yet another global theory, or simply a celebration of the end of colonialism. But it may also be viewed as a signpost pointing to contemporary phenomena in need of new modes of analysis and requiring new critiques. Some older styles of analysis in science studies – those that assume relatively closed communities and are predicated on the nation-state – do not seem adapted to explaining the co-production of identities, technologies and cultural formations characteristic of an emerging global order” (p. 643). Shifting between suspending the term postcolonial in quotes and invoking it as a common-sense adjective, Anderson takes up the difficulty of definition, on the one hand appearing to prescribe what postcolonial technoscience studies would look like and on the other refusing to say definitely what it is: “At the most basic level, a postcolonial perspective would mean that metropole and post-colony are examined in the same ‘analytic frame.’ But we would go beyond a recommendation of analytic symmetry and inclusion, and seek to understand the ways in which technoscience is implicated in the postcolonial provincializing of ‘universal’ reason, the description of ‘alternative modernities’, and the recognition of hybridities, borderlands and inbetween conditions” (Anderson, p. 643).

Amidst a messiness that he was trying to both point to and not confine too rigidly, Anderson enumerates three bodies of literature, colonial critique, postcolonial theory, and historical anthropologies of modernity, arguing that they risk simplification but might be helpful for conceptual purposes. He notes that “For fifty years or so, beneath various deployments, the ‘postcolonial’ has proven a productively ambiguous intellectual site”, and concludes that “It is futile to try to draw a definite boundary around postcolonial studies of science and technology: the enterprise is surely as heterogeneously populated as the terrain it describes. To attempt to list the canon of postcolonial science studies would be to miss the point. Like ‘modernity’, it just keeps on mutating” (Anderson, 2002, p. 645). However, he outlines a preferred approach: “Even the most local of studies should imply a network, suggesting connections with other sites through the traffic of persons, practices, and objects. The recent emergence

of richly textured, multi-sited studies of modern technoscience attests to the importance of both situating knowledge and tracing its passage from site to site” (Anderson, p. 645). Postcolonial technoscience should, at the minimum, involve identification of either a carrier or a motion (traffic, passage) between sites.

In response, Itty Abraham (2006) argues that postcolonial technoscience as elaborated by Anderson is inadequate for explaining how science is never simply about science, but also about nation-building, and that focusing on contact zones of clashing knowledges is problematic, particularly if local knowledge is conceptualized as “alternative”: “The proximity of modern nationalism and its ideological reliance on ‘local knowledge’ is too direct to ignore. Exploration of this possibility is crucial – the ideological work of alternative knowledge ends up reproducing and reinforcing the national scale over all others, since these are not debates over science, but always about something else” (Abraham, p. 210). After positing that Anderson’s analysis is primarily about political economy, Abraham moves to distinguish “postcolonial techno-science” as per Anderson, from “postcolonial science studies.” Abraham’s argument is then divided in two parts: in part one, efforts of scholars and political figures to recuperate an authentic Indian science inspired by what Abraham calls “Great-Tradition Hindu” are examined; part two concerns meetings or interviews conducted with laboratory scientists practicing science in contemporary India. In setting up the work that juxtaposition does, Abraham argues dubiously that Anderson positions postcolonial as an index and reference to the third world, as prime site of weakness and underdevelopment. In attributing this move to Anderson, he critiques the view that geopolitical entities are stable and speak for themselves. Without an awareness that they are not, “place becomes a metonym for a unique way of thinking tied to geo-cultural assumptions” (Abraham, p. 210).

Like Anderson, the practice of science is linked in the analysis to the possibility for and phenomena of colonialism, the term power operates as a universal law governing all relationships, and similarly the term postcolonial slips into and out of contestation, quotation marks, and commonsensical adjectival status – for instance, “Science and technology is, in a material and cultural sense, central to postcolonial visions of third world states and anti-colonial movements”. Abraham (2006) goes on to argue that universalist claims of science are not so pure: “Modernity, nation, and later, state all pass through and are interpellated in the institutions and cultures of modern western science. However, colonial and later postcolonial science was always a contradictory formation. Though science presents itself as universal knowledge, it is never able to do so unambiguously in a location distant from its putative origins in Western Europe. Science’s conjoint history with colonial and imperial power implies a constant representation of its condition in order to pass as universal knowledge in the colony” (p. 211).

Abraham's (2006) paper highlights a complex synergy between domestic and transnational effects: "This domestication of science is a necessary step in the remaking of the Indian nation as an exclusionary political project, a project which in turn leads to a new scale of violence against the nation 'others'" (p. 213). The study of science in relation to India leads Abraham to question in one sense whether there is an essentializable India, to interrupt the reduction of "knowledge" to "place", to elevate an appeal to excess, surplus, incompleteness, and instability. This means that: "Returning to Anderson's original formulation, it becomes clear that a postcolonial techno-science that focuses on 'contact zones' of clashing knowledges is dangerously incomplete unless firmly situated in political and institutional context". What should be sought is "an uneven and unsettled place where location no longer offers a one-dimensional and stable reference to knowledge", where "science as myth, as history, as political slogan, as social category, as technology, as military institution, as modern western knowledge, and, as instrument of change" suggests the surplus of meaning which inspires scholars and political figures alike to attempt to contain and employ it "as a source of geo-cultural certainty and stability" (Abraham, pp. 213-14).

While Abraham and Anderson intersect and diverge around how to reapproach the potency of what might be called a modernity-science-nation-West nexus, for scholars such as Thongchai Winichakul (1994), we only have modernity, science, nation and West because of something else – particular notions of time and space that have enabled historians to take for granted what a state is: "One of the major questions yet haunting the historians of early Southeast Asia concerns the formation of states. To be more specific, how one can talk about a state's formation without taking for granted what a state is – the criteria usually prescribed by social scientists, not by Southeast Asian peoples themselves" (Winichakul, p. 14). This a priori certainty seems to inhere in state theories wherever they travel:

An orthodox king-and-battle history assumes a static old-fashioned definition of the Thai nation-state and applies it to the past. An alternative history proposes dynamism and process but only according to certain scholastic criteria found outside the history it describes. Indeed, scholars have tried throughout the history of European nation-states to determine the true and natural constitution of a nation, that is, the truth of the identity of it. The entire history of a nation presumes the existence of such an entity or presupposes a definite qualification of it, as if its identity were already given. (Winichakul, p. 14)

Whereas Benedict Anderson (1991) points to the new temporal consciousness that helps to formulate the sense of a shared community in historical lineage, (as distinct from previous imagined communities), that is, how the new sense of homogeneous, linear time shaped the imagined community of the nation-state, Winichakul focuses on another



technology – the *geo-body*, describing the operations of technology of territoriality which created nationhood spatially. For Winichakul, the displacement of indigenous spatial concepts by modern geographical ones *produced* social institutions and practices that *created* nationhood. Whereas belief in linear time provided the connective sinews, the form of sequencing that permitted nation-state populations to appear homogeneous and unified, that is around, joined the same sense of time, with different special days marking the calendar, the geo-body, the technology of territoriality and mapping, allowed another form of sequencing to take hold. Modern geographical spatial concepts produced the idea that we are all a part of the same whole, just differently located on the map. The absence of the concept of physical boundaries in “premodern Siam” has been especially undertheorized or misplaced: “No study has been done on the relationships – either the transformation or shift or confrontation – between the premodern geographical discourse and the modern one. The absence of definite boundaries of the premodern realm of Siam is not taken seriously, as if it were due to some practical or technical reason” (Winichakul, 1994, p. 18).

Most studies of premodern Thai concepts of space indicate that maps were not always conceived as travel aids but as ways of representing relations between sacred entities tied to Buddhist doxology. Such studies tend to focus on the Buddhist cosmography known as the *Traiphum* cosmography. Traiphum, literally meaning three worlds, was an important doctrinal tradition within Theravada Buddhism. The best-known text of this tradition is *Traiphum Phra Ruang*, believed to be the major treatise of the Sukhotahi kingdom in the upper Chao Phraya valley in the thirteenth century. There are thirty-one levels in the three worlds in which the human level is simply one and in this map, beings are classified by merit and designated to live in particular levels according to their store of merit. The store of merit can be accumulated or diminished by one’s deeds and account for one’s next birth. By this logic, one’s present existence is the outcome of the previous one. While the surviving texts give concrete descriptions of the three worlds and especially the human one, as well as movements of the sun, moon, and seasonal changes, space is conceptualized in the *Traiphum* as a qualitative manifestation of existence, merit, and the relation between sacred entities (Winichakul, 1994).

Winichakul’s (1994) analysis is dedicated, then, to the question: “What dramatic effects ensue when people stop imagining space in terms of orderly relations of sacred entities and start conceiving it with a whole new set of signs and rules?” (Winichakul, p. 36). As for the variety of premodern maps, modern geography for Winichakul is not objective but it has real effects and is a kind of mediator. Earth and modern maps are not given objects, just out there. Rather modern geography is just one kind of knowledge, a conceptual abstraction of a supposedly objective reality, a systematic set of signs, a discourse. In analyzing premodern and modern discourses of space and



detecting those moments when the new and the old collided issues of “specificity” in provincial form, in terms of measurement, accuracy, and empiricism, for instance, arise.

Premodern maps had no interest in the accuracy of measurements and required no scientific, empirical methods. A map merely illustrated the fact or truth that had been known already, either cosmography, moral teaching, or a traveling route. A modern map, on the contrary, dismisses the imaginary and sacred approaches to the profane world. It constitutes the new way of perceiving space and provides new methods of imagining space which prevent the “unreal” imagination and allow only legitimate space to survive after the decoding process. (Winichakul, p. 55)

As Winichakul (1994) notes, though, the human world of the *Traiphum* has been treated as if it were the native’s view of the planet earth, a distorted or primitive one, contaminated by false belief or lack of knowledge. It is doubtful, however, whether the symbolic representation was in fact designed to represent the planet earth. The fact that depictions of earth are varied e.g., square and flat and round, *does not indicate the development of local knowledge of the earth or the lack of it*. More probably, it suggests that the materiality of the human world can be imagined in more than one way, whereas the spiritual meaning of the three worlds must be obeyed. Under this view, the spiritual dimension is the “reality” of the *Traiphum* space, and the most important knowledge needed to be transmitted correctly.

Moreover, there were other indigenous conceptions of space, at least four, including the concept of a profane, material earth in which small localities or military routes via rivers were depicted. If one concedes that a map does not have to be a representation of the earth’s surface, but can depict other relations, it is easier to understand that different representations were developed for different purposes. Maps of the earth’s surface for travel purposes, as opposed to cosmographic ones, drew upon traditions in China for mapping coastal areas that had developed from the early Christian era and in which land was always depicted either at the top or bottom of the page. These traditions gave way to techniques of mapping familiar in Europe through the influence of the Jesuits in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Different maps with different ideas about “spaces” thus co-existed and the crucial point here is that this suggests that there was not simply one way to represent the world *but rather that there was more than one world, more than one imaginal domain*.

There were several discourses on space existing in the field of premodern geographical knowledge. Each of them operated in a certain domain of human affairs and everyday life . . . there were terrains of knowledge within which particular conceptions operated; beyond their limits, other kinds of knowledge came into force. The knowledge of

certain villages and towns might have been operating at the local levels. The space of the Strategic Map or the Coastal Map might have had an effect on commanders of troops and Chinese merchants. Yet such knowledge might have been called into operation only in a military exercise, in administrative works, or for maritime trade. But when people thought or talked about Siam, the kingdom of Vientiane, or China, another kind of spatial conception might have come to mind. And when they thought or talked about the earth or the world they live in, the picture of the *Traiphum* might have preoccupied their minds. Like many other concepts in human life today and yesterday, shifts from one kind of knowledge to another or from one domain of spatial conception to another are not uncommon. (Winichakul, 1994, p. 33)

The imaginability of a nation in terms of linear time and a modern geographical map involves a number of changes, then, beyond vocabulary – in concepts/practices concerning the domain and limits of a country. The most important precondition, however, is the conception and practices of boundary lines, which distinguish one unit of sovereign space from another. Being represented by this code meant entering a new kind of earth space, which had another set of rules and conventions, another mode of relations. If a map is more than a recording or reflecting medium, then as Winichakul rightly points out the transformation may be more complex than anyone might expect.

The concept of boundary lines created the units for sequencing national territoriality as though all were part of the same whole, producing not just new versions of subjectivity but the very idea of subjectivity, of subject as distinct from environment. In the case of modern map-making, drawing lines was also the encoding of desire, the building of nations and ethnicities as political entities whose boundaries define “identity” and who must reproduce “within”.

Boundary lines are indispensable for a map of a nation to exist – or to put it another way, a map of a nation presupposes the existence of boundary lines. Logically, this inevitably means that boundary lines must exist before a map, since a medium simply records and refers to an existing reality. But in this case, the reality was a reversal of that logic. It is the concept of a nation in the modern geographical sense that requires the necessity of having boundary lines clearly demarcated. A map may not just function as a medium; it could well be the creator of the supposed reality . . . The boundary of a nation works in two ways at the same time. On the one hand, it sets a clear-cut limit on a sovereign unit; on the other, it imposes a sharp division between at least two units of space . . . Consequently, many conceptions and practices of interstate relations must be changed to conform with the new

geography of a country. The indigenous concepts must be displaced.  
(Winichakul, 1994, p. 56)

While such analyses may seem outside the purview of educational research today, I suggest that the collision of mapping techniques in South East Asia is instructive in at least two ways that are relevant here. First, in premodern techniques that Winichakul (1994) revisits, the object was not to understand one's self as a smaller unit within a wider whole that constituted the background for one's present location. Second, the importance of the shift into a global plane of reference is that the spatial reality that the modern map purports to present is never directly experienced in its totality – it is impossible to do so, no one can be “the earth” – so the modern map is an indispensable mediator in perceiving and conceptualizing such macrospace as though it is a totality, a function that none of the premodern maps ever performed. This dramatically transforms the meaning and the strategies that one can give to “Being” or to “relationships”, for instance, as well as introduces new strategies of representation that become naturalized and whose naturalness is made unfamiliar via other strategies: “The isolation of a piece of the earth's surface from the entire globe might be compared to the isolation of the earth from the whole galaxy in our minds today. In other words, the classification of a local geography and the whole globe as separate categories in the indigenous knowledge about space is comparable to the separate classification in modern science today of geography and astronomy or astrophysics” (Winichakul, p. 31).

On Winichakul's (1994) account, then, it would not be enough to ask when does Thailand become Thailand or where do the borders fall in which period. Both questions remain within a Newtonian physics and modern conception of geography that presumes what should be explained – that is, the revolution into linear time, the assumption that space is three dimensional, the presumption that there is only one world totality, and that Being can only be defined by understanding the self as one small part of macrospace.

Via Winichakul (1994), then, one might say that the very arrangement of seeing things in terms of I and World, with World becoming secularized and flattened to the globality of a World-Historical system, is one that had to be invented and spread. The geo-body was one technology that was involved. Rather than honoring the three worlds of the *Traiphum* and the more than one imaginal domain available beyond it, modern geography and map-making functioned in Southeast Asia (an appellation and descriptor that bespeaks this history) not in the quest for human perfection but in the introduction of the centrality of the human. Modern geography doesn't simply relocate the *Traiphum* worlds, for instance, into a new arrangement of cosmos and polis. Rather, it instantiates the very idea of polis and cosmos as separate but related realms that are integral to civic and personal governance, displacing indigenous conceptions of space and sacred entities as unreal, primitive, inaccurate, and immaterial. In the case of modern

map-making in premodern Siam, then, drawing lines was not just a technical task but an act of colonization which at that moment when there is a perhaps well-intended effort to “map the world” subjugates the possibilities already existing and in excess of simplistic appeals to the local, the provincial, and the specifically empirical.<sup>1</sup>

## **Western World-forming in the First Crisis of Modernity: The World, the Unconscious, and the Child in William James**

One of the broader frames for James’ research was a different kind of collision, particularly that collision where Darwinian evolutionary theory (“science”) met religion (specifically Protestant Christianity). *Talks* was based on a series of lectures that James delivered to schoolteachers from 1892 onwards and in which, despite his several decades of grappling with this collision himself, he tried to offer teachers a more Darwinian version of the operation of child mind. *Talks* urged an inscription of humanity as practice-oriented and contained critiques of the US invasion of the Philippine Isles. It drew on his very popular two-volume *The Principles of Psychology* for content, simplifying it as he noted for his intended audience. It was spectacularly successful when published with several additional essays. However, it remains almost completely unknown and unstudied in the field of education today.

In *The Principles of Psychology* James (1890/1923) argued that psychology must admit of Soul because no other explanation could offer an explanation as to why and how things had been designed the way they were. In *Talks*, there is very little discussion of Soul, of metaphysics in general, and instead the focus is weighted toward a biologic conception of Man and what that might offer to teachers. James asserted here that humans had been designed for practical affairs, and lectured that human biology was directed toward functionality and adaptation. It is in the minutiae of this rewriting of human ontology that the implications of a modernity-science-nation-West nexus become most notable and where efforts toward standardization (in the name of honoring plurality) are most efficiently lodged. For example, the sequence, human – mind – consciousness – rational-thought-that-is-procedural, inherited at a minimum from Descartes, constituted a broader parameter of the lectures. *Talks*’ version of associationist psychology is more indebted, however, 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 and Galton), and the difficulties that early

psychologists had reconciling Protestant theologies with mammalian ontologies. The theory of association James described was interpenetrated by such 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 indebted to what has already been noticed. For James, a biologic conception of man is unavoidable and what its acceptance permits is elaborated, namely that “We cannot escape our destiny, which is practical; and even our most theoretic faculties contribute to its working out” (James, 1899/1915, pp. 25-26). 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*. (James, pp. 23-24, emphasis added)

James (1899/1915) argues against the kind of associationist psychology built around the idea of *faculties*, as per Locke. He explains the difference 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” (James, pp. 118-119). Memory is 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” (James, 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”. 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. (James, pp. 170-171)

Ideas and feelings arising internally, such as out of memories, can constitute a sensible impression 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 was subjected to vociferous debate across the 1800s, debates to which Henri Ellenberger (1970) refers as part of “the discovery of the unconscious”.

Several discursive trajectories contributed to the Jamesian rewriting of human ontology beyond a Cartesian version of consciousness and into the affirmation of “irrational”, buried, or unknowable forces as influencing much human behavior. This included: challenges to Catholic practices of exorcism via hospitals, clinics and asylums where demonic possession now becomes treatable with therapies that are not exclusive to the Clergy; Romantic biologies and psychologies, e.g., F. J. Gall in Austria, Pierre-Jean-George Cabanis in France, and Erasmus Darwin and Charles Bell in England – a coining and spread of the term unconscious in English in late 1700s and early 1800s – where the new research involved 1) the emergence of comparative neuro-anatomy, 2) the framing of adaptationist and functionalist analyses of specific features of brain, 3) a redefinition of brain as an assemblage of parts or organs rather than an undifferentiated whole, and 4) anti-dualistic psychological models founded on mind’s perceived embodiment, placing novel emphasis on automatic processes and mind-body interaction (Richardson, 2001); German-language philosophical idealism indebted to the study of Sanskrit, Hindu cosmology, and bleaching of “the West” via the semiticization of Judaism and Islam (Masuzawa, 2005), e.g., Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, Schopenhauer and into von Hartmann – the shift from the early Hegel’s reference to a “nightlike abyss” that operated as a broader metaphysical principle which permitted



system-formation into Schopenhauer's more organic notion of an unconscious as a specifically human trait; and, the advent of animal magnetism, mesmerism, hypnosis via Mesmer, Puységur, Janet, Bernheim, Ribot, and Freud where the unconscious becomes a zone of the irrational, described as "Africa," depicted as hot, steamy, sex-laden and tropical in some accounts or cold, automated, and ruthless in others (Richardson, 2001). By the time James wrote, an un- or subconscious or subliminal had been taken for granted as in operation within a human subject on the basis of such complicated and sometimes overlapping trajectories, and as that which had to be accounted for in descriptions of human behavior and growth. James took this discovery, invention or fabrication seriously, and his comments to teachers have to be understood within the broader spread of his research program, which included lecturing on abnormal psychology at Harvard, delivering public lectures on exceptional mental states (The Lowell lectures, recomposed by Taylor, 1986) where he discusses theories of the subconscious or subliminal through contrasting waking awareness with dream-sleep and hypnotic states, as well as topics such as demoniacal possession and genius, and, his twenty-five years participation in psychical research including telekinesis, telepathy, mediumship and clairvoyance, all of which he was open to considering as scientific topics (Baker, 2009). When James thus posits that both inside reflections and outside sensations could play significant roles in terms of furnishing material to consciousness in a human it is not simply a technical statement but an index of the worldviews which he is both inviting into the analysis and those which he is keeping at bay. Phenomenology and empiricism are not as opposed as they may seem and he tends within the wider oeuvre to honor "both" strategies of truth-production. In *Talks*, however, where he tends to imagine a naïve audience, the new relationship between body (as both observable behavior and interior physiology) and mind (consciousness-as-thoughts in a sequence or associative chain) positions body and physiological measures as the legible surface and final arbiter in the early phases of child development for conscious processes *must* pass over into motion-as-change.

Consciousness is, then, 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 re-pass, and that constitute our inner life" (James, 1899/1915, 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 is understood through the dynamics of proximity-impression and focus/margin. Because consciousness *is always going on* the proximity of any thing, it can leave impressions and get "in" there even if one remains unaware that they "got in".

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. He takes this as so evident that the expressions focal object and marginal object “require no further explanation” (James, 1899/1915, 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” (James, 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.

Finally, the sequence of human – biologic – associational constitution – sensation – memory-consciousness-thought – focus/margin is rounded out by the theory of substitution-inhibition. James provides a 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 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” (James, 1899/1915, p. 37). Governing the entire activity of teaching is this principle: “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” (James, p. 37).

It is 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 suggestive of the colonizing and/or the imperialist arise. 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 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 memory-as-efficiency. 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-snatch; slap-cry; listen-beg; get-smile (James, 1899/1915, 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” (James, 1899/1915, p. 43). The native reactions of fear, love, curiosity, imitation, 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” (James, p. 63), suggesting the significance of mechanism of habit, association, apperception, interest, attention, memory, and especially will, and giving meaning to what James calls “superior reasoning power.” What demarcates Man from animal turns on the 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 reflected in post-Herbartianist and post-Darwinian debates over Being: 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” (James, 1899/1915, p. 190). Thus were formed new the horizons dedicated to perfection of organismic status, including introspective states and control of perceived external flux.

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

The (re)inscription of the human and the elevation of the practical as apex of maturity required “laws of operation” that had to be in place before the “laws of association” could ever be named as such. 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 textual dependencies that Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak refers to as “native

informant/s” (that is not “real interviewees”, but projections). Spivak (2000) argues that in Kant, Hegel, and Marx, in different ways, a projection of native informant(s) 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. (Spivak, 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)<sup>2</sup> – the emanation-return of native informant/s projected and coming back with messages and/or tasks performed. At least two such projections can be outlined here: native informant/s projected as Natives (that-which make *the* subject possible) and as feeble intellects (who-that lend solidity and capability to the subject).

The projections of Nativity 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 in “everyone’s” growth and development as the primordial stage. “They” operate implicitly as both outside objects of perception, common-sensically visible on the street and in textbooks, and inside as incitement to progress for those whose programming allowed for it. Such native informant/s became 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 apex of educatedness; and make the origins of consciousness appear unclear/invisible by visibly occupying the origin of human evolution as the clearly marked “dark” and “exotic” body.

The overt naming of feeble-mindedness, which included both feeble intellects and lunacy, brings reworked racializing distinctions into a new relation with dis/ability and nation-formation. 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. The liminality arises 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, 1892) 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 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.

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 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 also enables the feeble intellect to 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” (James, 1899/1915, p. 122). James returns to such intellects several times in *Talks*, never quite able to leave them behind. The depth of their work becomes clearer as the microphysics of memory is elaborated. It 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*” (James, p. 29; emphasis added). As Spivak notes, the process can only take place under propitious circumstances; the gap between the subject as such and the child can only be bridged by “culture” where “nature” has allowed. Nature needs culture, but cannot be produced by it. Production lies with what Spivak (2000, p. 15) calls the “empirico-psychological reflexes” of lesser-than-subjects who-that 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 hold up the strata 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” (Spivak, p. 25). The native informant/s projected as feebleminded return to occupy the negative side of that which they help *routinize within the series*. Such informant/s thus perform three main roles: troubling the passage of linear time as meaning progressive improvement; messing up the neatness of racializing binaries; and illustrating 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 Native establish the poles upon which a series can be identified as a series, the informant/s projected as feeble-minded 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 (2000) notes, this invocation of linear time is crucial to re-securing the exclusivity of the narrator, of who can occupy the location of theory-builder: “Time often emerges as an implicit Graph only miscaught by those immersed in the process of timing” (p. 38).

### **From Association to Colonization?**

Postcolonial technoscience insights in the realm of social sciences such as education and psychology indicate how an ethics of disciplinary divisions of knowledge instantiate certain values at their point of inception, and thus require an interrogation of “the way systems of knowledge protect and isolate their primary categories from external accountability” (Carrette, 2007, p. viii). The above had indicated how a modified associationist psychology and the labor of native informant/s together lent specificity to the possibilities for being human, for how differences were perceived at all, and what a world was. The sympathy for external (international) forms of injustice that James attends to, such as in the Preface to *Talks* where he admonishes the US invasion of the Philippines Isles, 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 (1899/1915) asserts that “variety in unity being the secret of all interesting talk and thought” (p. 112), then, one might argue that specific strategies of foundation operate at the site of production of associationist claims to pluralism, indeterminacy, and variety. This is precisely the 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 deeper racializing and ableizing foundations of master narratives dedicated to reproductive purity, such as Social Darwinistic evolutionary theory, even as one, such as James, critiques its impact elsewhere on Protestant beliefs. It is not that James can be or is being accused of vaunting such beliefs openly and aggressively. Rather, his “I invite you to seek with me some principle to make our tolerance less chaotic” (James, 1899/1915, 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 been interfered with, so to speak, by the liberal pluralist and humanist structure of the complaint, positioning such others as “semi-savages” in Jamesian terms, and by thus cutting off the possibility of *not having to say “No!”*, of *not having to engage at all* in refuting the normativities embedded in appeals to human practicality, democratic self-governance, *and* critiques of their transgression that organizations such as the Anti-imperialism League leveled.

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 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 both aspects swirl through his writing, there is something else in James that has to do with the idea that self is a *collective* concept (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”. 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 to individual. James notes the circularity when he asserts that individuality presupposes and proposes. Through education built 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. How the differences between minds form amid the larger process of “I” formation, James argued, is a continued mystery that psychology had not come close to explaining.

In this version of associationism, 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 do not 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, unwittingly providing a philosophical rationale for colony-formation. It will ensure that the impressions being received from “the outside” can be assimilated within existing foundations of the self-as-cultured-nature, 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.

Tolstoi's philosophy, deeply enlightening though it certainly is, remains a false abstraction. It savors too much of that Oriental pessimism and nihilism of his, which declares the whole phenomenal world and its facts and their distinctions to be a cunning fraud. A mere fraud is just what our Western common sense will never believe the phenomenal world to be. It admits fully that the inner joys and virtues are the essential part of life's business, but it is sure some positive part is also played by the adjuncts of the show. If it is idiotic in romanticism to recognize the heroic only when I see it labelled [sic] and dressed-up in books, it is really just as idiotic to see it only in the dirty boots and sweaty shirt of some one in the fields. It is with us really under every disguise . . . But, instinctively, we make a combination of two things in judging the total significance of a human being. We feel it be some sort of a product (if such a product could be calculated) of his inner virtue and his outer place, – neither singly taken, but both conjoined. If the outer differences had no meaning for life, why indeed should all this immense variety of them exist? They must be significant elements of the world as well. (James, 1899/1915, p. 284)

The instantiation of the subject's Ego with the ability to project an individualized worldview (the many cognizers needed to view the facts and worths of life for James), and the assumed solidity and validity attributed to "exterior" objects reinforces the synergy between scientific rationality, realism, and colonialism even in accounts, such as *Talks*, that might contest the third term and be open to phenomenology and introspection. The collusion is not so much avoided by appeals to pluralism, perspectivalism, or multiculturalism. Normalization and individuation were twin processes of nation-building in the US, with mainstream education and psychology guided by broad-based Protestant commitments. The standardization of models of mind and method (e.g., appeals to pragmatism and the elevation of practice, instrumentality, and social utility) become in James specifically the new site of a unification sought (yet never achieved) among populations divided by enormous historical insults and injuries and with different conceptions of Being, life, death, and awareness, cosmologies irreducible to human-centrism or to belief in such a thing as a discrete mind.

This excursus through James' ruminations thus illuminates the strategies of world-forming already in place as well as those being modified. It points to an already geographied world that depends on war and acquisition metaphors to navigate it; the effort toward standardization of the liberalist human, which enables critiques of invasions abroad while being built upon ontological gradations accepted at home and that form the basis of empathy for "semi-savages" overseas; the dependency upon child/adult developmental theory and the unconscious/conscious couplet as implicit

struts in social criticism of relations that are now seen as geopolitical – the (bad) automated behavior of the colonizer/invader and/or their inherent contradictions need to be raised to the level of consciousness so they can be acted upon and the world changed back to mature, self-governing, democratic nations that live and let live; and the production of the mature, self-governing democrat who requires local forms of hierarchy, denigration and insult to see himself as such – the “superiority effects” built into liberal versions of geopolitical equality, pluralism, and toleration.

### **Western World-forming at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century: The Globe, the Unconscious, and the Child in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)**

OECD's [the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's] latest PISA survey of the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds shows that some countries have seen significant improvements in student performance since 2000. Korea further increased its strong reading performance between 2000 and 2006 by 31 score points, the equivalent of almost a school year, mainly by raising the proportion of top-performers. Poland increased its reading performance by 29 score points over the same period. Mexico and Greece saw significant improvements in mathematics performance between 2003 and 2006. However, across the OECD area as a whole learning outcomes have generally remained flat, while expenditure on education in OECD countries rose by an average of 39% between 1995 and 2004.<sup>3</sup>

The strategies of world-forming in education's early field-formation and symbiosis with psychology sought a point of unity within a fractured “national” space via the attempted standardization of mind development and universalization of method. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the presumption of mind and nation as holistic entities has already been rooted in the way problems are posed and solutions imagined. PISA can be seen, then, as a meeting point of the technology of a world map, occidentalist presumptions about the nature of reality and evidence (science, statistics, and realism), and about an almost uncontested locus of awareness in the human (mind, consciousness, memory, and mental measurement). It is important to remember that beyond these wider historical vestiges which give it shape that PISA is also an offspring of the OECD and that OECD's version of world, unlike the *Traiphum*, relies upon the nation frame as the defining structure of belonging and upon capitalism and democracy as disarticulable. OECD explains in its website, for instance, that it is concerned to bring together the governments of countries committed to democracy and the market economy from around the world to: Support sustainable economic growth, boost employment, raise

living standards, maintain financial stability, assist other countries' economic development, and contribute to growth in world trade. Within this broader frame PISA is meant to answer the question as to whether increased percentage of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) expenditure is correlated with improved examination outcomes as determined by teenagers' response to test questions. In the 2006 PISA survey of the fifty-seven participating countries, thirty-one were OECD 2006. The domains tested in 2006 included reading literacy, mathematical literacy, scientific literacy, student attitudes to science and the focus domain for that year was science (in 2000 it was reading and in 2003 mathematics). The emphasis on science in PISA and more widely within the OECD is not reducible to science being the focus domain for the 2006 survey. Science, rather, occupies a much more pivotal location such as solving economic problems:

At a time when scientific and technological know-how is helping to drive growth in advanced economies, the results of PISA 2006 reveal wide variations in skills levels. Student attitudes to science will be crucial to countries' economic potential in tomorrow's world, and PISA 2006 gives a detailed picture of how well students around the world are prepared for the challenges of a knowledge society.<sup>4</sup>

Science also marks and restricts notions of ability, acting back upon what it means to be-able-to do well at school:

Based on tests carried out among 400,000 students in 57 countries in 2006, the latest PISA survey focuses particularly on students' abilities in comprehending and tackling scientific problems.<sup>5</sup>

In Australia, Canada, Finland, Japan and New Zealand, at least one in seven students reached the top two levels of scientific literacy. In Greece, Italy, Mexico, Portugal, Spain and Turkey, by contrast, the proportion was lower than one in 20.<sup>6</sup>

and becomes the dominant discourse in defining what a problem is. That is, science never causes problems such as environmental degradation or economic crises – it can only solve them – and it becomes important to be able to state problems in a format that remains amenable to scientific study.

The survey identified considerable interest among students in some scientific issues. Most, for example, were aware of environmental issues such as forest clearing and greenhouse gases. However, they were generally pessimistic about the future, with fewer than one in six believing that problems such as air pollution and nuclear waste disposal would improve over the next 20 years. Those who performed better in science showed greater awareness of environmental issues but were also more pessimistic.<sup>7</sup>

The foundations within the reasoning upon which PISA rests draws science-ability-nation-economy into a restricted sequence and are not exclusive to PISA. They are integral to other evaluation mechanisms as well, such as the Third International Mathematics and Science Survey (TIMSS), that preceded PISA but which do not have the same reach or level of media popularity. Central to the implementation of such surveys and processing of data are several assumptions familiar within occidental thought, including a belief the nation-state as the sovereign zone of educational policy, in a discrete subject whose authenticity and belonging is determined by, if not owned by, the nation frame, in the role of memory and thus a conscious/unconscious relation which examination techniques trade on and test, and in objectivity attributed to quantity and its formulation as numerical. For Jin Y. Park (2006), however, there is something beyond the vortex produced by such presumptions and concerns, something beyond secularized belief in the coherent, unified and discrete self of Western individualism which is both fabricated and tested at school, something beyond projections of occidental conditions of proof called science, Abrahamic traditions called religions, and the organization of humans called nations. I want to explore here, then, some of these beyonds as a way of approaching how that which is inherent to educational evaluation that PISA and other instruments embody can act back upon the conceptions of world permitted, excluded, and produced through the naturalization of their explanatory devices.

In *Buddhisms and Deconstructions*, Park (2006) offers a provocative and what would be counter-intuitive series of associations for many Western educational theories: a precise understanding of the nature of self, mind, ego or consciousness is not the key to an understanding of existence, essence, or identity, or vice versa; truths are not simply those things that exist they way they appear; and perception is not dependent upon induction into discursive regularities that make appearance possible. In undoing the idea that an understanding of existence is not dependent on Knowing Thyself or an inward turn, Park points to other possibilities for just Being.

In offering an alternative to Western versions of causality, for instance, which he calls dependent co-arising Park (2006) argues that such a notion leads us to the theory of no-self, which is not a theory that no self exists at all. Dependent co-arising and appeal to no-self constitute two comprehensive theoretical bases of Buddhist philosophy for Park, which at the meta-level he does not disaggregate or parse into different schools. Dependent co-arising resembles a concept of causation except that it takes place at multidimensional levels. Being is always already the result of simultaneous happenings of different elements that come together to construct what is called a self. Being in the world is thought seriously impaired by one's determination or desire to grasp something permanent. In an attempt to demonstrate the impossibility of affirming any enduring entity in one's being, human being is analysed in terms of five aggregates of matter, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness, none of which can



independently exist or represent an entity. Together they lead to concept of no-self which Park argues is commonly misunderstood as opposite of a theory of self.

No-self theory is the middle path travelled between affirmation and negation of an existing self, which prevents our seeing self as discrete but maintains its relevance precisely because of the ambiguity. This is because Buddhist traditions are keenly aware of the problem entailed in dualism. No-self theory is not a notion of lack of self for lack presupposes the existence of self. The difference in this case is that the theory of enduring self affirms, whereas the theory of no-self – if it is understood as lack of self – negates the existence of self. In both cases, self should exist.

To misunderstand no-self as lack of self, then, presumes dualism where A and not A are opposites. However A and not A are not binary opposites as dualistic thinking assumes but fall into the same category in that both presuppose the existence of A. The misunderstanding of the theory of no-self can have two opposite outcomes, however: either one is bound to the confusion of reality and phenomenon, or, one is emancipated from the traditional concept of self. Misunderstanding, then, is a significant pedagogical device.

The illusory nature of self is not simply reducible to Asian, Eastern, or specifically Buddhist philosophies, however, especially given that the labelling of such discourses *as* philosophies and as unified doxology is highly problematic and frequently contested, let alone via appeal to written texts. Arguing in support of no-self theories across a variety of discourses, Simon Glynn (2006) posits that existential phenomenology, poststructuralism, and Buddhist epistemology converge around the view of a single, discrete self as illusory, with differential consequence within each:

The ego is traditionally held to be synonymous with individual identity and autonomy, while the mind, which is closely associated therewith, is widely held to be a necessary basis of cognition and volition, and the responsibility following therefrom. However, Buddhist epistemology, Existential Phenomenology and Poststructuralism all hold the notion of an independently subsisting self-identical subject to be an illusion. This not only raises problems for our understanding of cognition (for if such a self is an illusion who does the perceiving and who is deluded), and volition (who initiates acts), but also therefore for the notion of responsibility (for in the absence of an independently subsisting subject there appears to be no autonomous agent), while for Buddhism it also raises an additional problem for the doctrine of reincarnation (for in the absence of such a self it is unclear who is supposed to be responsible for failing to overcome desires and attachments, and concomitantly gets reincarnated). (Glynn, 2006, p. 197)

Whereas in phenomenology this questioning of the self raises further questions about cognition and who is doing the perceiving, in Buddhist epistemology it raises questions about reincarnation – who or what is it that is supposed to be born again? In so-called poststructuralism, critiques of the discrete self led to several other questions or responses that emanated especially from challenging the nature/culture binary – one response was called archaeology, an effort to step outside metaphysics in philosophy; another was a peculiar kind of reflexivity, how social sciences keep using the tools that we also criticize.

Derrida (1978) elaborates these consequences without naming their outcome “poststructuralism”. That is, at least two forms of problematization come from interrogating the nature/culture opposition, the realization of which makes language bear within itself the necessity of its own critique. First, once such an opposition makes itself felt, a systematic questioning of its history that is neither philological nor philosophical arises as a first possible action. This is archaeology – to deconstitute the founding concepts of the entire history of philosophy. Derrida sees that as both the most daring beginning of a step outside philosophy and the most difficult for it is “much more difficult to conceive outside philosophy than is generally imagined by those who think they made it long ago with cavalier ease, and who in general are swallowed up in metaphysics in the entire body of discourse which they claim to have disengaged it from” (Derrida, 1978, p. 284).

The second possible action is to conserve old concepts – such as the subject, self, other, language, discourse, world – while here and there denouncing their limits. There is a willingness to abandon them as well as to exploit their efficacy, they are used to destroy the old machinery to which they belong and of which they are themselves pieces. “This” Derrida (1978, p. 284) argues “is how the language of the social sciences criticizes itself”, to preserve as an instrument something whose truth value is criticized. Or a third response, as exemplified in Mitchell (2002), simply entails drawing attention to how social sciences have overlooked “the mixed way things happen”.

Overlooking the mixed way things happen, indeed producing the effect of neatly separate realms of reason and the real world, ideas and their objects, the human and the nonhuman, was how power was coming to work in . . . the twentieth century in general. Social sciences, by relating particular events to a universal reason and by treating human agency as given, mimics this form of power. The normal methods of analysis end up reproducing this kind of power, taken in by the effects it generates. In fact, social science helps to format a world resolved into this binary order, and thus to constitute and solidify the experience of agency and expertise. In much of social science this is quite deliberate. It tries to acquire the kind of intellectual mastery of social processes that dams

seem to offer over rivers, artificial nitrates over sugarcane production, or DDT over arthropods. It is less important whether one understands how things work, more important how effective are the immediate results. But more careful forms of historical or cultural analysis can do the same thing in less obvious ways, by leaving technics unexamined, or talking about the “social construction” of things that are clearly more than social. (Mitchell, 2002, p. 52)

For Bynum (1999), however, both East and West are projections and emanate from an “elsewhere” that is rarely named or acknowledged. In *The African Unconscious* Bynum argues that the roots of modern Western psychology lie in a group of philosophies referred to as personalism which were in circulation in different forms before the continent was named as such, in which subject and object are mutually interpenetrable, and where it is possible to communicate with ancestors four generations past and one generation into the future. For Bynum, the roots of ancient Eastern mysticism (which he delimits to China, India, and Japan) lie in personalism as well – Eastern philosophies draw their key content, such as belief in a universal energy flow like chi or kundalini from personalism. This suggests a dualist positioning of Africa as the “unconscious” inhabiting the projection/naming of West and East, and West and East as now unconscious of Africa.<sup>8</sup> Bynum’s analysis can be suggestively extrapolated to understanding the desire for sequencing in a modern episteme, for identifying invisible links, unseen influences, or audit trails between apparent parts indebted to monistic conceptions of a universal fluid or grid that provides the “conceptual structure” that makes transmogrification of forms, travel, and interpenetration of forms a possibility.

In these “beyonds”, it becomes obvious to note that “West” is challenged from multiple directions and that what has been built into educational evaluation are very specific and arbitrary discursive trajectories and onto-theo-philosophical presumptions that encourage a particular way of saying/seeing and way of Being. What happens, then, when “West” is critiqued from “within” and “without”? For Denis Cosgrove (2001), efforts to recuperate or legitimate West-as-arbiter can take several forms to which he links the refiguration of “the Apollonian eye”, the all-seeing and omniscient that locates itself above all other perspectives. These refigurations I think we can see implicitly in James’ disciplining of Tolstoi and rewriting of human ontology and in PISA’s emergence and structure. For instance, one form of recuperation is the shifting but enduring focus on the self and continuous delimitation of what constitutes the human/nonhuman line: “Closely linked to the Apollonian vision and its universal claims is the shifting discourse of the self and human distinction” (Cosgrove, 2001, p. xi). Another is reassertion of realism through ocularcentrism, the kind of strategies that enable counting and statistics to operate as proof: “The victory of ocular vision over other forms of knowledge parallels the history of modern colonialism, and the processes are not unconnected” (Cosgrove, 2001, p. 16).

A third is to bury the notion of West or Western within conceptions of globe that are already suggestive of “its” centering: “both ‘West’ and ‘Western’ are themselves historically made and altered constructs, shaping and differentiating an already signified globe” (Cosgrove, 2001, p. x). In their intersection, such strategies act to re-ground figures that were threatening to withdraw behind a veil under the weight of other ways of forming a silence/saying relation – re-grounding the geo-body as the big picture or frame of reference and resecuring materialist representations of a profane earth, reasserting the individuated self with a single life as the universal category of Being and with the human as the most important (now economic) actant, and reaffirming the open but closed eye of that self and its penchant for numbers as the most significant portals to truth-production.

The projection of occident or West as the World, or as template for how World should be depicted, is highly problematic at several levels. In unraveling the links between the whole earth literature that preceded modern geography, the changing art of mapping, the invention of aerial flight, and the structures of subjectivity and regionalization that have now become available Cosgrove reminds us that the shifting format that the desire for a view above other views has taken is not innocuous or innocent. The recuperative strategies and possibilities that Cosgrove identifies become conveyed through different spatial representations indebted to onto-theo-philosophy and modern geographical techniques and embedded in new instruments such as PISA. Cosgrove points, for instance, to how both *ascent* and *dispersal* become two possibilities that crystallize in new versions of an Apollonian eye. The two trajectories can be linked, disjoined, or contemporaneous. The theme of *ascent* connects the earth to cosmographic spheres, so that rising above the earth in flight is an enduring element of global thought and imagination. Belief in the ascent of the soul – that the destiny of human life is transcendence to a heaven above the earth’s surface – connects to the metaphysics of harmony embraced by the *somnium*. This might be understood as the (well-intended) transcendent position of the expert, who rather than residing in an otherworldly location of a God, steers and shapes the analysis of “diverse” subjects-as-objects in the thisworld toward a unity without announcing the provincialism of their own position – “knowledge” as free-floating, ejected from body, seeing without being seen.

The theme of *dispersal* refers to a different strategy in which the Apollonian gaze seizes divine authority for itself, radiating power across the global surface from a sacred center, locating and projecting human authority imperially toward the ends of the earth. This is embodied in notions of simulacra and of distribution, whether of goods and services or of justice – the effort to make the ends of the earth more like home, but with a nice exotic twist, a just-noticeable-difference, enough to titillate and to arouse but not to disturb the radiation and its point of emanation. We might

understand PISA, then, as implicitly trading on both these forms of spatiality: in the first case data is pinned to a universalized framework of the nation-state that transcends any effort to the contrary, to be represented by another means (“there is nothing beyond the nation”) – the ascent is prefigured as both complete and stultifying, with scientific experts delineating the problem and the solution; and in the latter, the radial action occurs through the effort to recruit more and more participants and to disseminate the results, drawing correlations between educational structures and examination outcomes that makes each national location into a variation of the same (“there is nothing but differences between nations”). To that end, such forms of representation and such movements are not unique to PISA and locate it rather as one of what Delanty and O’Mahoney (2002) refer to as the many social projects of modernity/nationalism. It is here, in the synergetic effects of such social projects, that an analysis of the textual productions of the first and second crises of modernity begins to expose the possibilities and limits for world-forming, revealing the restrictions in contemporary discussions, research and notions of common sense to an already-signified globe constructed through arbitrary and peculiar lenses that repeatedly delimit the experience of Life to nation frame and selfhood.

### **Crises of Modernity and the Refiguration of an Apollonian Eye**

The dream of human flight sufficiently high to offer a global perspective is an enduring theme of Stoic philosophy, in which seeing attains the dual sense of sight (*noein*) as an empirical check against speculation, an assurance of truth in the descriptions of the earth, and of vision, the capacity for poetic grasp beyond mundane or earthbound daily life, for a truer, imaginative knowledge. This is the implication of the whole-earth literature from Cicero, Lucan, Seneca, which offers its male heroes their destiny in synoptic vision. Their *telos* combines an imperialistic urge to subdue the contingencies of the global surface with an ironic recognition of personal insignificance set against the scale of the globe and cosmos. (Cosgrove, 2001, p. 53)

The view above other views is the propensity to paint a bigger picture that disciplines and orders other pictures within it. In characterizing such a move as Apollonian, as “male-centered”, “Eurocentric”, and “transcendent” in its qualities, Cosgrove argues that these terms have since become linked to other connotations such as “West” with World, sphere, eye, desire for breast, and with globe, globalism, and globalization. But what I think anglophone educational research confronts today is much broader than West/rest debates; such research emanates from already disunited planes and plateaus both confronting and ignoring, for instance, a series of associations where West is already considered irrelevant, backward, and nineteenth century, where any

conversion of the nomenclature from “West” into “North” won’t resuscitate it, and where as such transcultural inquiry offers more unique and irreconcilable axes for analysis in a post-American, post-European, and post-Middle Eastern “world”.

For Cosgrove, what is at stake, then, in *New Times*, is the question of authority, an authority in its so-called Western forms that has only become recognizable by being hopelessly bound to exercising and legitimating force over subordinate social and natural worlds. This is of course not the only way to recognize or organize authorization but for Cosgrove it now passes under the name globalism, establishing both the field of discourse and the manner of resistance to it.

Today, the globe continues to sustain richly varied and powerful imaginative associations. Globalization – economic, geopolitical, technological, and cultural – is widely recognized as a distinguishing feature of life at the second millennium, actualizing the Apollonian view across a networked, virtual surface. Resistance from the solid ground of earth, characteristically located at the spatial and social limits of Apollo’s conventional purview, proclaims limitations of its male-centered Eurocentrism, a globalism hopelessly bound to exercising and legitimating authority over subordinate social and natural worlds. The criticism is well founded, both historically and morally. But the issue is by no means simple. The Apollonian perspective prompts ethical questions about individual and social life on the globe’s surface that have disturbed as often as they have reassured a comfortable Western patriarchy. (Cosgrove, 2001, p. 3)

The effort to refigure an Apollonian eye has had two antithetical outcomes in Cosgrove’s view, then, the effects of which are not completely deterministic: one outcome of trying to refigure an Apollonian eye is that it reassures a comfortable Western and Christian patriarchy via the strategies of ascent and dispersal and another is that it just as often disturbs it. This is, in a sense, to be expected from a motion that attempts to see “diversity” only in relation to deviation from a norm. It is here, then, that one can begin to appreciate the different levels and registers through which standardization is wished toward in James and in PISA, and what the relative outcomes of world-forming could be.

The Jamesian Apollonian eye, if taken as a part of and response to the first crisis of modernity, formed within a post Civil War timespace, a reconstructionist moment in which lynching of African Americans was at its peak, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines had been invaded, trade unions were gathering strength, and right to vote movements were being organized. James comments and lectures on most of these events, saving his most vociferous attacks for the critique of empire-building. As this analysis has indicated, however, that critique of nation-building via imperialism bequeaths another world whose standardization is built out of appeals to plurality.



The Apollonian eye in *Talks*, then, is comported around the unity in diversity theme in regard to a) the practical human perceiver of adaptationist evolutionary theory who detects emergencies and escapes them to survive, b) child development as moving from lower (sensation) to higher psychic faculties (e.g. reflection, mediumship), and c) the ideal adult human mind as independent and self-governing – “how did I have just that thought at this time?” The system-closure here is performed by consciousness as always already going on, sequencing the system, incorporating comparison between states (whether those states were considered mental or national) as a principle of knowledge-production, and embodying verification processes in the psychical realm that were modeled off the corporeal. Significantly, the disputes haunting this crisis differ from the later one: James’ psychological research which he gives very little insight into when lecturing to teachers but participated in for twenty-five years generates a different idea about comparison than could appear in PISA. For James, comparing mutually exclusive entities actually enables questions about the interpenetration of subjects and objects, e.g., telekinesis, spirit-return, telepathy, which all become possible to investigate as part of science but that for him teachers didn’t really need to know about. This meant that linear time and three dimensional space could be put into question e.g., via clairvoyance to some degree, and that unknowability was relocated away from the Kantian thing-in-itself – mysteriousness now lies in the obscure operation of a human unconscious and psychic phenomena, as well as in how an initially collective self of the child is made into a specific kind of individualized adult.

As part of and response to a second crisis of modernity from 1960s onwards in which civil rights, feminist, land rights, ecological, and decolonizing/independence movements to name a few exposed the politics of previously “neutral” categories, including the category of nationhood, PISA’s refiguration of an Apollonian eye draws upon the availability of somewhat different disputes and could be taken as a significant statement about them. The apparent loss of what Cosgrove calls a “comfortable Western patriarchy” and what Foucault calls “the consoling play of recognitions” generates fear of a post-American, post-European, and post-Middle Eastern world inspiring paradoxical responses. The unity in diversity theme is re-enacted, for instance, via the structure and function of nation-state as universal category of belonging and the school system as its site of management – difference can only be configured in terms of being above or below a national and international norm. The analytical system is sequenced in this case not by consciousness but by democracy plus economy, a territorialized conception of globe, and linear time – that is, instead of a consciousness that is always already going on, there’s always already a market going on. The verification processes within this version of the always already are statistics and consciousness-as-awareness in form of recall of content for testing purposes. This does not open onto scientific questions of subject-object interpenetration and the meaning of comparison thus

changes. Comparison as a principle of knowledge-production straddles what Schriewer (2006) calls the contrasting of mutually exclusive, quasi-autarkic entities (different nations) with the primacy of structures and functions – a non-total substitution in the conceptualization of reality from essence to relation. No excess is presumed in the system but there is both the potential for waste (of GDP expenditure) and surplus that is produced in a constrained way e.g., the mystery of Finnish success in PISA. In this sense, unknowability is externalized – it is relocated from the otherworldly region of the human unconscious where James dug for meaning to formal “relationships” between how adult humans structure schooling and how youth perform on tests. Ability becomes almost universalized here, but the notion of ability permitted still cannot explain the possibilities inherent to Bynum’s portrayal of personalism, of how children can talk to ancestors four generations past and one generation into the future and consider themselves to have received helpful information of James’ (1909/1986) assertion that the truth of telepathy had already been established.

In sum, the strategies of world-forming that have reverberated within such apparent crises and social projects have depended upon a modernity-science-nation-West nexus to produce World as having a Western part and have achieved this via appeals to several key presumptions including linear time, three-dimensional space, language and consciousness-as-a-system, and nation-as-a-home for an eventually individualized human. The synergistic effects sequence a kind of logic in which self is presumed to exist and becomes knowable only as one small part of macrospace that is conceived as the same macrospace for all, the same World-Historical system that can now be analyzed as globality. Integral to this production was the contraction of the otherworldly within this sequencing, putting pressure on a thisworldly internalist frame of reference. Comparison becomes a principle of knowledge-production within an absolutist and finite globe that is to be mastered without remainder, a conception of world as Jean-Luc Nancy (2007) has already noted, that has no self outside of itself and which is turned inward upon itself, destroying itself.

Under the pressure of this inward turn, which ironically appears as an analytical turn toward the expansiveness of a more cosmopolitan or transnational awareness, the unknowable becomes relocated to new domains such as an organically interior unconscious as in James or relations, structures and functions such as in PISA. Here intersubjectivity becomes the precondition for subjectivity as in James or international becomes the precondition for national as in PISA. The otherworldly within both formulations, however, is deemed now knowable to some extent, flattened into the preserves of a rational system that can analyze “it” as object. To that end, the unconscious, either of person, of system, or of history, begins to take up slack in the explanations “we” offer to each other in anglophone research, keeping in play the mysterious, elevating memory-as-reservoir, and giving both educational testing and

postcolonial technoscience studies their purchase. In doing so, appeal to an unconscious indirectly fulfills the negativity inherent to Abrahamic traditions, in a sense taking the place of the non-transgressable border between a heaven and an earth and becoming instead immanent in Man's sense of control in his predestination – that which unfolds from within and which under new technologies of self can thereby be inspected and opened to governance. The counter-movement to this more Jamesian, anti-statistical, pro-phenomenological, and introspective response to the first crisis of modernity was the elevation of agency and structure in sociology and policy analysis in the effort to rationally account for all events, of Marx over the likes of a James, Freud, or Jung – a counter-movement ironically now embodied in PISA's pro-capitalist approach to the question of expenditure on education. Either way, however, the strategies for world-forming pinned hope for perfection and betterment to childhood experiences as the site of a conscious/unconscious border's formation, with the unconscious, whether of child or of a school system, considered to provide the motor for ascension, transcendence, or fall. The operation of this unruly region had the potential to undermine the deliberative, liberal subject who planned change and enacted reforms built on direct cause-effect logic, and as such, the versatility of appeal to an unconscious turned "its" operation into a kind of perpetually present exceptional state that needed to be better known, mined, and ordered, in service to the intensification of abilities and the Apollonian eye of a Western scientific rationality conceived as the all-knowing view above other views.

### **Conclusion: Crises, States of Exception, and Democracy in New Times**

The state of exception appears as a threshold of indeterminacy between democracy and absolutism. (Agamben, 2003/2005, p. 3)

If exception makes rule possible, what then happens when exception and rule become undecidable? (Agamben, 2003/2005, p. 58)

The preceding has alerted us to the possibilities and leverage that an analysis of the quest for fixity, of the rigidity of place, self, and progress discourses as they congeal and harden especially through mind science, and the associated seepage, offers to reapproaching and rephrasing educational issues and ethics, but what of what might be foreclosed? If we really value one of these inventions of modernity/nationalism, that one called democratization, then we are presently in a productive moment to re-examine what constitutes a democracy, authority, a political act, an issue, and a legitimate form of educational inquiry and to do so for a moment by taking our eyes off the allure of PISA or apparently counter-posed "qualitative research" approaches and examining some other events contemporaneous with them and that engage the

question of authority at the level of Constitutions rather than simply the disciplinary, the academic, or the classroom level.

Agamben's (2003/2005) analysis is predicated on the assumption that democracy and West are inherently aligned and linked. He argues that populations in the West (left undefined, but with most reference to Italy, Germany, France, the UK, and USA in the analysis) have failed to notice how democracy is being rewritten – attention has been turned elsewhere. Across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries especially a unique kind of totalitarianism arose out of democratic traditions and this occurred and is occurring through invoking a state of exception.

The subsequent history of the state of siege is the history of its gradual emancipation from the wartime situation to which it was originally bound in order to be used as an extraordinary police measure to cope with internal sedition and disorder, thus changing from a real, or military state of siege to a fictitious, or political one. In any case, it is important not to forget that the modern state of exception is a creation of the democratic revolutionary tradition and not the absolutist one. Although the paradigm is, on the one hand (in the state of siege) the extension of the military authority's wartime powers into the civil sphere, and on the other a suspension of the constitution..., in time the two models end up merging into a single juridical phenomenon that we call the *state of exception*. (Agamben , p. 5)

But why does this matter? For Agamben (2003/2005), if exceptional measures are the result of a crisis, then who and what decides what qualifies as a crisis? Would for example environmental degradation qualify? Or is it rather that such a form of democracy, which depends periodically and covertly on totalitarian tactics is pushing populations into tighter and tighter governance by laws which have no legal form and yet which end up with the power to define what is human, what is being, what is living, and what a crisis or reality?

It is difficult even to arrive at a definition of the term [state of exception] given its position at the limit between politics and law. The question of borders becomes all the more urgent: if exceptional measures are the result of a period of political crisis and, as such, must be understood on political and not juridico-constitutional grounds, then they find themselves in the paradoxical position of being juridical measures that cannot be understood in legal terms, and the state of exception appears as the legal form of what cannot have legal form. On the other hand, if the law employs the exception – that is the suspension of law itself – as its original means of referring to and encompassing life, then a theory of the state of

exception is the preliminary condition for any definition of the relation that binds and, at the same time, abandons the living being to law.

Agamben (2003/2005) notes that the state of exception phenomenon sometimes remain prisoner in a vicious circle in which the emergency measures that proponents seek to justify in the name of defending the democratic constitution are the same ones that lead to its ruin. The question of borders and sequencing, of abandoning and binding the living Being to law become urgent not just in regard to the redistribution and recomposition of authority, its very practice, but also in regard to the effects on more “philosophical” or ontological possibilities and conceptualizations. The strategies deployed toward absolutism in contemporary democracy have a counterpart, a mate in a sense, that focuses less on the spectacular forms of violence and revolution and are aimed instead at making definition of Being absolute, in this case trying to confine, capture or understand Being only in relation to *logos*, and one could add here to mind, to rationality. This is not simply about nationalism-as-territory and war but battles over but what pure being could mean.

This struggle for anomie seems to be decisive for Western politics as “the battle of giants concerning being” that defines Western metaphysics. Here, pure violence as the extreme political object, as the “thing” of politics, is the counterpart to pure being, to pure existence as the ultimate metaphysical stakes; the strategy of the exception, which must ensure the relation between anomic violence and law, is the counterpart to the onto-theo-logical strategy aimed at capturing pure being in the meshes of the *logos*. (Agamben, p. 59)

For Agamben (2003/2005), a real battle is brewing not simply between political parties but over the very nature of Being in Western metaphysics. In efforts to capture Being in the meshes of the *logos*, to reduce Being for example to mind, to phenomenologies of subjective experience, to continuous introspection linked to what it is possible to think or to PISA surveys, mental measurement, tests, numbers, and evaluations a different kind of violence arises which creates some new experiences like PISA shock while diverting attention from others, such as the performative and instrumental way Being is redefined, corralled, ordered, disciplined and confined. This raises indirectly the specter of the new eugenics (“neugenics”) and an efficiency, order, and improvement discourse both related to and far beyond Reformationist and Counter-Reformationist debates, for example, over gaining access to otherworldly salvation through the natural perfection of human beings.

The point of laying out how important the state of exception has been to Western democracies is for Agamben (2003/2005), then, in part an effort to “ceaselessly try to interrupt the working of the machine that is leading the West toward global civil war”

(p. 79). He is not arguing that everything Western and democratic is bad but rather that a global civil war would be. If that preventive effort is one reason why critiques from within and without the West have been mounted, then the ambiguity or zone of anomie within which contemporary educational research might operate and help forge may be seen as a productive one, affirming of the responsibility inherent to engaging with new situations and intimately aware of how ambiguity is sometimes exploited as the excuse for a more absolutist or totalitarian response.

My point in raising this is not to imply that a conspiratorial or aggressive campaign is in place, somehow set up against idealist humanist notions of the subject. Nor is it to proffer in place of such contemporaneous phenomena a new totality in the guise of honoring humanity's expansive spirituality, abyss-like possibilities, and different versions of difference. Rather, I think it simply draws attention to the contemporary contraction of sites in which "democracy" can be recognized or practiced at all relative to previous distributive logics, how this is in part due to the recuperation of modernist efforts to think in terms of perspective and to attempt a fixing from a single locus as a source of authority, generating in some cases fear of and exploitation of "ambiguity" in order to assert absolutist or totalitarian responses to the "clash of civilizations". In the process, production (e.g. markets, economies, GDP) and reproduction (e.g., of a population, canon, values, lifestyles) become central intellectual and institutional tropes. Such tropes inhabit positions of conservatism and of radicalism, holding up two sides of the same coin that distributive logics generate – hope and fear.

From the emergence of a modernity-science-nation-West nexus, to the pro-phenomenology of Jamesian consciousness studies, to the pro-empiricism of PISA's memory-based testing, to speculations regarding "pure being" as captured in the meshes of the *logos* it should by now be evident how inadequate it is to account for contemporary phenomena in education simply through occidentalist appeals to nation-state and self as naturalized frames of reference, and just as evident what some of the challenges and aporia are that arise as a rationality is confronted with what exceeds and slips its grasp. The issues, themes, and ethical considerations that educational research faces leaves us with at least two requirements – we must and do act, and, that compulsion to action can never rest as a simple moral exhortation as though the term action is agreed upon, agentive, and universal in its location, visibility, or intent, as though it comes only after a thought, conscious, premeditated, willed, and planned, as though such a must is not already complicit in the production of a particular version of World that the call for "action", "agency", and "resistance" seem ironically dedicated to dismantling at the same time. We have at this moment then a heavy responsibility and a different kind of crisis, not just of the "West", of modernity, or of exceptionality, but of what the imperative to make a phenomenon admit its truth has left "us" with, an interesting paradox caught between *différance* and the absolute. That is: Can "we" navigate the new nature of education and democracy without



a map in New Times and yet still preserve and have an “earth” left on which to argue over what it means to live, to inquire, to educate, to authorize, to Be, or to act politically?

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> It is important to note here that in postcolonial technoscience debates and analyses such as Winichakul’s the primacy of ocularcentrism is not fully contested. This has been more fully contested in Deaf Culturalism, Deaf Awareness, and Deaf Nationalism movements, which do not rely on groupings by spoken vernaculars and which offer a conception of nationalism that is placeless and transnational relative to existing structures. Such problematization of the nationalism-deafness relation are discussed more fully by Davis (1997) and Wrigely (1996) and provoke how, via ejecting voice from body, key struts of Western ontology as well as critiques of modern geography can be troubled.
- <sup>2</sup> *Epistrophé* is like a projection from within, an apparent movement or 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 labeled as “outer”, “exterior”, “foreign”, or “external”. The effect is labyrinthian, a confusion or non-clarity over what or whether there is an inner and outer. It can incite even greater efforts to demarcate and classify. I have appropriated this concept from Sells (1994). Spivak speaks differently, drawing on Lacan, of *foreclosure*.
- <sup>3</sup> Source:  
[http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_34487\\_39713238\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,3343,en_2649_34487_39713238_1_1_1_1,00.html)  
Title: OECD’s PISA survey shows some countries making significant gains in learning outcomes
- <sup>4</sup> see endnote 3
- <sup>5</sup> see endnote 3
- <sup>6</sup> see endnote 3
- <sup>7</sup> see endnote 3
- <sup>8</sup> The human unconscious was literally referred to as Africa, as a dark continent and as an unknown, in nineteenth century debates over mind. I read Bynum’s analysis as playing on and reversing these prejudices.

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